

# Mark the Man





# In Mark chapter 14, the story of the arrest of Jesus, we have an interesting verse ...

“Immediately, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.’ All of them deserted him and fled.

A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.



*Painting by Papel Popov*

Was this young man Mark? (I like to think so).  
There at the end - and the beginning.

At the end of his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes about those with him:

Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions - if he comes to you, welcome him.  
*Colossians 4.10*

Barnabas appears at the beginning of Acts - he was there in the earliest days of the church.

There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.  
*Acts 4.36*



In Acts 12, Peter is freed from prison by an angel:

After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.' As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many had gathered and were praying.

*Acts 12.10-12*

Later in that chapter, Barnabas and Paul take Mark from Jerusalem to Antioch

Then after completing their mission Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark.  
*Acts 12.25*

Imagine being part of all this excitement!





Paul's first missionary journey started with Barnabas and Mark (*Acts 13.5*). They travelled to Cyprus, then sailed to Perga. Here Mark (who is also called John just to confuse us) left them (*Acts 13.13*). Paul and Barnabas continued, preaching the Gospel in what is now Turkey. This journey took place round about AD 45-47, about 12 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.



*Traditional picture of Paul on a Missionary Journey*

Four years later Paul and Barnabas were going to set out again. Barnabas suggested taking Mark. Paul refused. There was an argument.

Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.  
*Acts 15.37-41*

So Paul and Silas went through Syria, while Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus - the disagreement led to a good result.

*The argument has even been done in Lego!*



Mark is not mentioned in Acts again.



Paul must have forgiven both Barnabas and Mark (and vice versa). When Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians he was in prison.

In Paul's letter to Philemon he lists his friends:

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow-workers.

*Philemon 23,24*

Imagine being in the same room as Mark, Luke and Paul!

In Paul's Second letter to Timothy he writes:

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

*2 Timothy 4.11-13*



*Jesus and the Gospel writers  
St Bartholomew's church, Whittingham*

These men are real human beings - even if we use stained glass windows to illustrate them.

Mark also spent time with Peter. In Peter's First letter he too lists his friends:

Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you, and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. Your sister church in Babylon [Rome], chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. *1 Peter 5.12-14*



Mark must have spent time with Peter, listening to the stories of Jesus. From these stories he wrote his Gospel.

St Mark writes his Evangelium at the dictation of St Peter, by Pasquale Ottino, 17<sup>th</sup> century, Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux

The Egyptian Coptic Church believes that Mark travelled to Alexandria in Egypt and founded the African church. He was martyred in AD 68.

According to legend, his bones were stolen in 828 and taken to Venice - where St Mark's church now stands.

