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Editorial Office: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

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Principal Contributor	Thomas R. Shepherd
Editor and Translator	Soraya Homayouni
Consulting/Contributing Editors	Margie English, Esther Doss, William Fagal
Publication Manager	Lea Alexander Greve
Editorial Assistant	Sharon Thomas-Crews
Cover Art and Design	Lars Justinen
Interior Design	Bruce Fenner
Illustrations	Jon Gilbertson
Pacific Press®	Miguel Valdivia
E. G. White Estate Consultant	Dwain Esmond

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The Book of Mark

The Book of Mark tells the story about Jesus' life and His work on earth. From the beginning of the Book of Mark, the reader knows who Jesus is. Jesus is the promised Savior, the Son of God (Mark 1:1). But the people in the story have a hard time understanding who Jesus is and what He came to earth to do. Everyone in the Book of Mark has a hard time understanding, except for the people filled with demons. The demons are afraid of Jesus and His mighty words. The demons know exactly who Jesus is!

Jesus commands the demons to keep this information secret. Why does Jesus tell the demons to tell no one who He is? Bible students have wondered about the answer to this question for hundreds of years. This topic has a special name: the Savior's Secret. Why does Mark want us to keep quiet about who Jesus is?

We will soon learn the answer. As we study the Book of Mark, we will see that some things are kept secret, and some things are shown. At the end of the Book of Mark, all the secrets about Jesus end in a surprising way. The secrets are replaced with a powerful message about Jesus and who He is.

We can divide the Book of Mark into two parts. Chapter 1 to near the end of chapter 8 is about an important question. **Who is Jesus?** The answer is found in His teachings and miracles. Again and again, Jesus wins the fight against evil. He gives hope to people who are suffering and hurting. Jesus teaches important Bible truths. All these things tell the reader that Jesus is the Savior, the Promised One from God. Jesus is the Savior that the Hebrew people have waited a long time for.

We must wait until the middle of the Book of Mark to read about someone who isn't filled with a demon to announce who Jesus is. This announcement answers the question in the first half of the book about who Jesus is. Peter is the one who announces, " 'You are the Christ [the Chosen One, the Savior]' " (Mark 8:29, ICB).

The second half of the Book of Mark starts with Mark 8:31 and goes to the end of the book. The second half of the Book of Mark answers the question, **Where is Jesus going?** The answer is surprising. Jesus is going to the cross. The cross was a symbol of shame in Bible times. The cross was the most terrible way a person could die in the kingdom of Rome. No one expects the Savior of the whole earth to end up there. His

followers expect Jesus to beat Rome and make Israel a powerful country.

Jesus' followers can't understand what He is saying when He tells them He must die. As the Book of Mark continues, the followers ask Jesus fewer and fewer questions about this painful topic. They don't want to hear about it because they want Jesus to throw the Romans out of Israel and start His kingdom on this earth.

Before Jesus dies, He meets the Jewish spiritual leaders who plan to kill Him. At this time, Jesus' followers continue to hope that Jesus will start His kingdom on this earth. The followers of Jesus are surprised when He is arrested, then forced to stand trial, and finally is nailed to the cross. These terrible happenings destroy the followers' hopes.

After Jesus is arrested, He stays calm. Earlier, in Gethsemane, Jesus fought a terrible battle with Himself over His decision to die for our sins (Mark 14:32–42). Later, on the cross, Jesus feels no hope. He cries out in deep sorrow: “ ‘My God, My God, why have You left Me alone?’ ” (Mark 15:34, NLV). The Book of Mark shows us Jesus' dark experience on the cross. The cross shows us how much it cost God to save us: the life of His Son. But the cross does not end Jesus' work on earth. After Jesus wakes up from the dead, He meets with His followers in Galilee. As we know, this meeting is the start of the Christian church.

The Book of Mark is an amazing story about the life of Jesus. Mark tells the story in a fast-moving style of writing. He doesn't offer us a lot of extra words or explanations for the things that happen. Mark just tells the story. He lets the words, the actions, and the miracles tell the story about the life and death of Jesus from Nazareth.

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Thomas R. Shepherd, PhD, DrPH, is a research professor of New Testament studies at Andrews University. Tom and his wife, Sherry, have two grown children and six grandchildren.