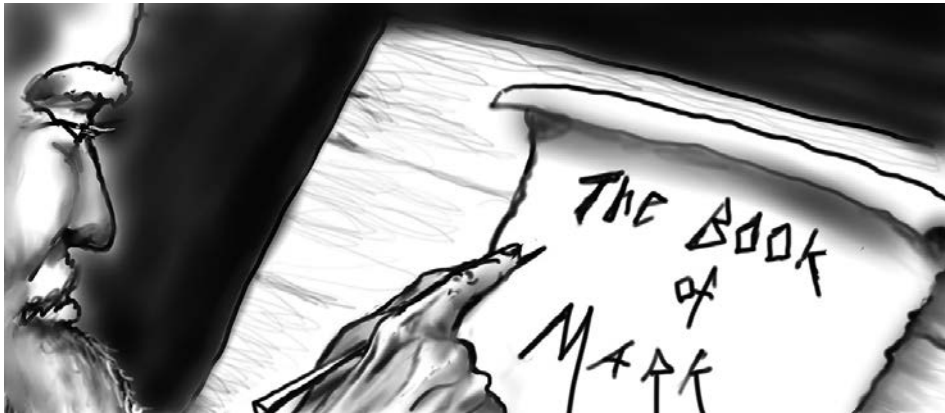


Who Is Mark?



SABBATH—JUNE 29

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Acts 12:12; Acts 15:36–39; Mark 1:1–8; Mark 1:9–13; Mark 1:14, 15.

MEMORY VERSE: “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee and told people the Good News from God. He said, ‘The right time is now here. God’s kingdom is very near. Change your hearts and lives, and believe the Good News!’ ” (Mark 1:14, 15, ERV).



People connected the Book of Mark with Peter (read 1 Peter 5:13).

WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF MARK? The first four books in the New Testament tell us about the life of Jesus. These books do not tell us who wrote them.

From early times, people connected each of the first four books of the New Testament with a church leader or one of his friends. People connected the Book of Luke with Paul (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24). People connected the Book of Mark with Peter (read 1 Peter 5:13). This information helps us to discover who wrote Mark.

Again, the writer of the Book of Mark doesn’t tell us his name. But early church leaders tell us that John Mark wrote the Book of Mark. John Mark sometimes traveled with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2, 5). Later, John Mark worked with Peter (1 Peter 5:13), which is why people from early times connected the Book of Mark with Peter.

The first thing we will do this week is learn about Mark. Who is he? What does the Bible tell us? Mark failed early in life. Later, he changed and wrote a book of the Bible. We will study why Mark failed. Then we will learn how he changed and later wrote a book about Jesus’ life.

THE MAN WHO FAILED (Acts 12:12)

Read Acts 12:12. How does the Book of Acts introduce Mark?

Most people believe that John Mark wrote the Book of Mark. John Mark was a young man when the story in Acts 12 happened. This story happened sometime between the years A.D. 44 and A.D. 46. In Acts 12:12, we learn that Mark is the son of a wealthy woman named Mary. Mary supported the church with her wealth. She held prayer meeting in her home. You can read about this prayer meeting in Acts 12. Church members came to Mary's house to pray after Herod put Peter in prison. Peter escaped from jail. Then Herod died a terrible death. John Mark doesn't really have an important part in this story. But we first learn about him here. Later, we will read about his connection with Barnabas and Saul.

Read Acts 13:1–5, 13. How did John Mark start working with Saul and Barnabas? What happened later on, after John started working with them?

Acts 13 tells us about the first trip that Saul and Barnabas took together in about A.D. 46. Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, doesn't talk about John Mark until verse 5. John Mark is a helper or servant at that time. Luke doesn't say anything else about John Mark until verse 13. Then Luke says that John Mark went back to Jerusalem.

Luke doesn't tell us why John Mark goes back home. We can imagine in our minds the reason. Ellen G. White says, "Mark grew frightened. He lost his courage. For a time, he failed to give his whole heart to God's work. Mark wasn't used to hard times. The dangers and hard times filled his heart with fear, and he lost hope."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 169, adapted. In short, things got too hard for John Mark. So, he wanted to go home.

Do you sometimes feel the same as John Mark when things in life get too hard? Maybe you backed off from something or failed in your Christian walk with God because you were afraid. What did you learn from the experience?



“The dangers and hard times filled Mark’s heart with fear, and he lost hope.”

ANOTHER CHANCE (Acts 15:36–39)

Why did Paul reject John Mark? Why did Barnabas give John Mark another chance? Read Acts 15:36–39 for the answers.



Mark came back later because Barnabas, his cousin, believed in him.

Acts 15:38 tells us the reason why Paul rejected John Mark: John Mark left Paul and Barnabas. John Mark also stopped working for God. For sure, we can understand why Paul was upset. Preaching and teaching in Bible times was hard work (read 2 Corinthians 11:23–28). Paul depended on his fellow workers to help him. Together, they fought against evil angels. Paul thought that anyone who walked away from this fight should not be a part of his team.

Barnabas didn't agree. Barnabas liked John Mark and didn't want to leave him behind. Paul and Barnabas fought about John Mark. In the end, Paul and Barnabas separated because of Mark. Paul chose Silas to travel with him. Barnabas took Mark.

The Book of Acts doesn't explain why Barnabas chose to take Mark with him. Acts 15 is the last chapter in the Book of Acts that talks about Barnabas and Mark. But this chapter is not the last place we read about Mark in the Bible.

Read Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24; and 1 Peter 5:13. What do these verses tell us about Mark?

Mark changed. In these verses, Paul tells us that Mark is a blessing to him and his work for God. Paul thinks of Mark as one of his fellow workers. Paul wants Timothy to bring Mark with him. The Book of 1 Peter tells us that Peter also had a close friendship with Mark. Paul and Peter wrote their books in the early A.D. 60s. So, they wrote 15–20 years after Paul rejected Mark, in Acts 15. Mark failed and left the work. But then he came back later because Barnabas, his cousin, believed in him.

Think about a time when you or a friend failed. Were you or your friend given a second chance? How did that experience change you? How did your experience change the one who helped you? How did your experience improve the work you did for God?

THE MESSENGER (Mark 1:1–8)

Read Mark 1:1–8. Who do these verses talk about, and what do these people say or do?

These verses tell us about three people: Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1), God the Father (Mark 1:2 gives us a hint about Him), and John the Baptist. John was a messenger and preacher.

In Mark 1:2, 3, we read a quote from the Old Testament that comes from three separate Old Testament verses: Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; and Malachi 3:1. Mark blends these three verses together to show us what will happen in the story about Jesus' life.

Read Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; and Malachi 3:1. What is the same in each of these verses?

Exodus 23:20 talks about an angel that God will send to lead Israel to the Promised Land. Isaiah 40:3 tells us how God will appear in the desert and the road that will be made ready for Him. Malachi 3:1 talks about a messenger who comes before the Lord. The messenger makes the way ready for the Lord to come. All three verses talk about a trip.

Isaiah 40:3 shows us the future work of John the Baptist. In the Book of Mark, the Lord Jesus is on a journey. This trip will lead him to the cross, where He will die for us.

But much more must happen before Jesus dies on the cross. In Mark 1, Jesus' journey is starting. Mark will tell us all about it.

In Mark 1:2, 3, John the Baptist calls people to stop sinning and to come back to God (Mark 1:4). John the Baptist dressed the same as Elijah, God's special messenger (compare with 2 Kings 1:8). In Mark 1:7, 8, John the Baptist talks about the coming One who is more powerful than he is. This Person will do more than John can do. This Person is Jesus. John says about Jesus, "I am not good enough to get down and help Him take off His shoes" (Mark 1:7, NLV). This verse shows us that John understands that Jesus is more than human. Jesus is God.



**John says about Jesus,
“I am not good enough
to get down and help Him
take off His shoes’ ”
(Mark 1:7, 8, NLV).**

JESUS' BAPTISM (Mark 1:9–13)

Who is at Jesus' baptism? What happens when Jesus gets baptized? Read Mark 1:9–13 for the answers.

John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River. When Jesus comes out of the water, He sees the skies open. The Holy Spirit comes down on Jesus, the same as a dove. God says from heaven to Jesus, “ ‘You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you’ ” (Mark 1:11, ICB).

These things help us understand that Jesus' baptism is special. Together, these things announce the start of Jesus' work on earth. Many of the same things that happen in this story will happen in Mark 15, when Jesus is on the cross.

Next, the Holy Spirit sends Jesus into the desert. The word “send” comes from the Greek word “ekballô” (Mark 1:12, ERV). Mark also uses the word “ekballô” when he talks about how Jesus commands demons to come out of people (Mark 1:34, 39). This word tells us that “send” was a push full of force. The story in Mark 1:9–13 shows us the Holy Spirit's power in Jesus' life.

Mark shows us Jesus as both God and man. How? Let's review. Mark shows us that Jesus is the Christ, the Chosen One, the Savior (Mark 1:1). As God, Jesus is the Lord. John the Baptist is the messenger that announces Jesus' coming (Mark 1:2, 3). Jesus is more powerful than John (Mark 1:7). Jesus is the Son that God loves. As we saw already, the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and fills Jesus (Mark 1:10, 11). As a man, Jesus is baptized. Notice that John baptizes Jesus; Jesus doesn't baptize John (Mark 1:9). Then the Spirit sends Jesus into the desert (Mark 1:12). Jesus is in the desert for 40 days. Danger is all around Jesus. Satan tries to get Jesus to sin (Mark 1:13). Finally, angels come to help Jesus (Mark 1:13).

Why does Mark show Jesus as both God and Man? Mark wants us to understand that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. He is God. At the same time, Jesus also is a human. He is both our Brother and our Example. How can we understand this amazing Bible truth? We can't. All we can do is accept it with faith. We must believe in this Bible truth. This Bible truth shows us God's love for the human family.

Jesus was God. At the same time, He became a man to save us. What does this wonderful Bible truth teach us about God's amazing love for us?



Jesus is both our Brother and our Example.

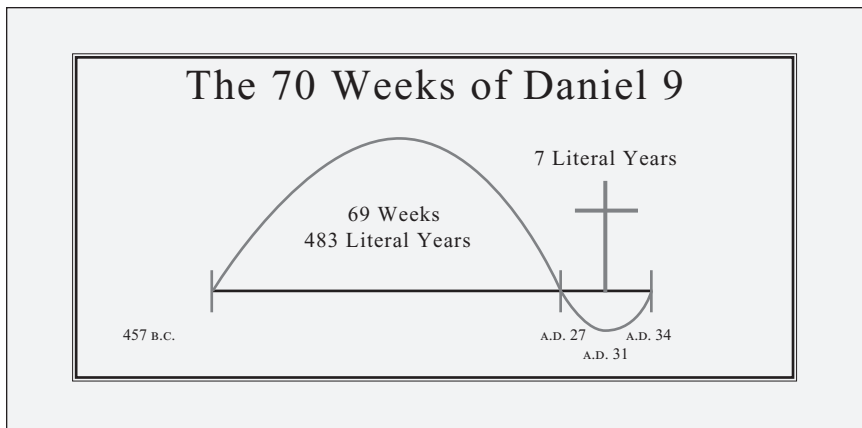
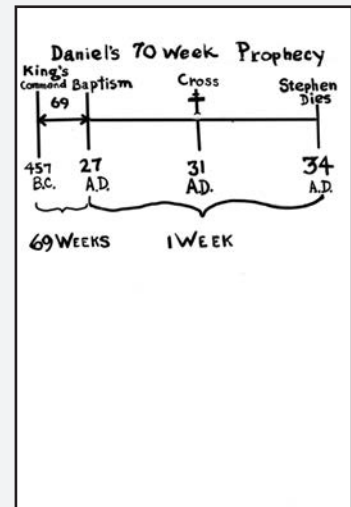
THE GOOD NEWS FROM JESUS (Mark 1:14, 15)

Jesus preached the Good News. What are the three parts of His message in Mark 1:14, 15?

Jesus' message has three parts:

Part	Meaning
1. A special time message.	The time is now.
2. Promises.	God's kingdom is near.
3. An invitation to follow Him.	Stop sinning. Believe the Good News.

What time message is Jesus talking about? Jesus is talking about the 70-week time message in Daniel 9:24–27. Daniel 9:24–27 shows us the time of Jesus' baptism. The Holy Spirit fills Jesus. Then Jesus starts His work for God (Acts 10:38). The chart below shows us when the 70-week time message will happen in history:



Jesus is talking about the 70-week time message in Daniel 9:24–27.

In this time message, one day is a symbol for one year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). The time message started in 457 B.C., when Artaxerxes, king of Persia, made a law. The law permitted the Jews to go home and rebuild the city of Jerusalem (read Ezra 7).

69 weeks in this special time message continue from 457 B.C. until A.D. 27. At that time, John baptized Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit filled Jesus. When the Spirit filled Jesus, Jesus' work on earth for God started.

3½ years later, Jesus died on the cross.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Voice in the Wilderness,” pages 97–108, in *The Desire of Ages*; and “Heralds of the Gospel,” pages 166–176, in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

Did you know that the first angel in Revelation 14:6, 7 says much the same thing that Jesus says in Mark 1:15? The First Angel announces the Good News to everyone on earth in the end times. The First Angel’s Message has the same three parts that we see in Jesus’ message. The chart below compares Jesus’ message with the First Angel’s Message. Both announcements have a time message, a promise, and an invitation:

Mark 1 (topics)	Compare with	Revelation 14
The time (Daniel 9)	Time message	God, our Judge, is finished (Daniel 7, 8).
God’s kingdom is near.	God’s promise	The Good News
Follow Jesus.	Invitation	Worship God.



The First Angel’s Message has the same three parts that we see in Jesus’ message.

The First Angel’s Message announces the start of God’s work as Judge. The time message about the 2,300 days shows us that this work will start in 1844 (Daniel 8:14). God’s work as Judge gives God’s kingdom to His people (Daniel 7:22). During the end times, the First Angel invites everyone on earth to worship God and to follow Him. In Revelation 13, the evil animal powers make a false god for everyone on earth to honor, praise, and worship.

So, Jesus’ message in Mark 1 connects with the time messages in Daniel. The First Angel’s Message also connects to Daniel’s time messages at the end times.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 What does baptism mean? Read Romans 6:1–4 and John 3:1–8. Compare these verses with the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1:9–13. How do these verses help you understand better what baptism means?
- 2 Compare the Good News from Jesus in Mark 1:14, 15 with the First Angel’s Message in Revelation 14:6, 7. How do these messages help you better understand your work as a Seventh-day Adventist today?

PART 1: CONFUSED WITCH DOCTOR

Father was the most well-known person in his small town in Nepal. Everyone came to Father for healing. Townspeople believed that Father's magic could heal any disease. Father came from a family of witch doctors. Father became a witch doctor after the death of his father, who was also a witch doctor.

Father killed animals and gave their blood as gifts to the spirits. In exchange, Father asked the spirits to heal people. Father believed the spirits respected his gifts. So, he was confused when he couldn't heal the person he loved most: his wife. Father killed a chicken and offered its blood to the spirits and asked them to heal his wife. But her pain didn't go away. Father didn't know what was making her sick. So, Father gave money to another witch doctor. But Mother lost weight. Then Father took her to a medical doctor. But Mother continued to get weak.

Father was confused. He became more confused after his grown daughter, Divya, came home to help mother. Father came home and couldn't find Mother or Divya. Father searched the house. Finally, Father found them in an upstairs room. Mother and Divya were kneeling on the floor. They also were talking to someone he couldn't see. Father left the room quietly without bothering them. Father wondered if his daughter also was a witch doctor. When Father saw Divya later, he asked her what she and Mother were doing.

Divya said, "We were praying to my God to heal Mother."

Father asked, "Which God?" Father prayed to many gods.

Divya said, "To my God, Jesus. I left our family religion. I found a new God in Jesus." Divya explained that Jesus made the skies and the earth. "If I pray, He will hear and heal Mother," she said. Father didn't understand how this God could be more powerful than any of the family gods.

Divya lived in another town. When she needed to go back home, she asked Father for permission to take Mother with her. Divya said, "Mother is sick. You don't have time to take care of her because you are working. Let me take her with me."

Father worked hard as both a witch doctor and a builder. So, he didn't have time to take care of Mother. He didn't think Mother would live much longer. So, he let Divya take her.

Six months passed before Father saw Mother again. Father traveled to Divya's house. He was surprised to see Mother was healthy. Father was filled with questions. He asked Divya, "Why is Mother well? What medicine did you give her?"

Divya said that she prayed only to God. "God heard my prayer. Now Mother is well. She goes to church with me."

Father didn't believe it. He laughed. He never heard of a God who healed people without payment or an animal gift.

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Mother and Divya were kneeling on the floor. They also were talking to someone Father couldn't see.