

## John Mark Acts 12:1-12

- Intro: John - Jewish name.  
Mark - Roman name.

Important background on John Mark - from a Christian home, acquainted with Peter.  
I. Mother was a wealthy Jewess, and evidently a widow at the time he is first mentioned in scripture: Acts 12:12.

She was not only a Christian, but a leader of the Jerusalem church, and fearless in her testimony for Christ.

- Peter was evidently the one who was largely responsible for his salvation. Cf. 1 Pet. 5:13.

Obviously, Peter's release from prison, especially after James had been martyred (Acts 12:2), had had a profound influence on John Mark. He appears in scripture amid overwhelming evidence that God answers prayer.

- II. The second thing we learn about John Mark is that he enters missionary service as a companion of "Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 12:25). Note the prominence given to Barnabas at this point over Paul (not called Paul here).

The same emphasis of Barnabas (first), then Paul continues in Acts 13. And John was their minister (Acts

13:5). The GK word for minister is ὑπηρέτης - made from two words ὑπό, under, and ἑρέω, to row.

Since this is spoken of in connection with "synagogues" (Acts 13:5) Robertson and others take this as meaning that John Mark assisted Barnabas and Paul as rabbis had ministers, attendants, to assist them.

It was as an under-power, under the authority of others that John Mark entered the ministry.

III. The third view of John Mark is one of departure in connection with the emergence of Paul to Paul as a leader over Barnabas in the ministry. Cf. Acts 13:9. After this it is not "Barnabas and Paul", but "Paul and Barnabas" (Acts 13:43, 46).  
Exception: Acts 15:12.

Why did John Mark leave them? Cf. Acts 13:13.

(1) Was he homesick? Nothing to indicate this. Although many have left the mission field for this reason.

(2) Did he disagree doctrinally with Paul + Barnabas? Nothing to indicate this either. He knew what they were preaching before he left Jerusalem. They were in Gentile territory but still ministering

primarily to Jews.

John Mark (3)

(3) Could he have been jealous for Barnabas? This, while not certain, seems most likely.

Barnabas was John Mark's uncle (Col. 4:10). In Acts 11:25 Barnabas brought Paul into the work of the ministry while he (Barnabas) was enjoying tremendous blessing (cf. Acts 11:22-26). It was hard for John to see Paul move ahead.

IV Fourth: John Mark rejected by Paul (Acts 15:39).

Paul and Barnabas were preparing a second missionary journey when John Mark became a divisive issue between them. Read (Acts 15:36-41).

This would seem to confirm the reason for John Mark's departure from them in Pamphylia in Acts 13:13.

It was at this time that the controversy in Jerusalem and Antioch came to a crisis where we read that "Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation" (Acts Gal. 2:13; cf. vv. 11-14.)

Whether or not Paul felt that John Mark would side with Barnabas

at a time when Barnabas had wavered, we do not know. What we do know is that "Paul thought not good to take him with them..." (Acts 15:38).

"Departed" = GK, apostatized, <sup>mark, the</sup> apostate.  
 [Note: at this point John begins to be referred to as Mark (Roman name).] He is not referred to again in the book of Acts.

#### IV. What is the sequel?

Paul continued to observe Mark's ministry although Mark was now more closely associated with Barnabas and Peter (cf. 1 Pet. 5:13). John Mark was to Peter what Timothy was to Paul.

How ~~the~~ Mark got to Rome, we do not know. But he was there with Paul (Col. 4:10, a prison epistle). Some feel that Peter had gone to Rome and that John Mark remained after Peter left. This would have been before Paul came as a prisoner. But we do not know this for certain.

Note that John Mark is included in what Paul says in Col. 4:11 b, "Comfort" is a medical term used "for assuaging or alleviating pain" (Robertson, Making Good In The Ministry, p. 160). The word is used nowhere else

in the NT. Cf. also Pt. 24.

- Paul calls him a co-worker, one ~~who~~ works together with others, a member of the team, no longer an apostate, nor just a minister, but a fellowworker.

After this John Mark evidently returned to Asia Minor so that when Paul writes his last epistle he says in conclusion what we read in 2 Tim 4:11 &c.

"Profitable" = not only usable, but easily used. Gr, εὐχρηστος.

He would work as Paul would possibly he would serve as a translator of Latin or Aramaic. Maybe he would be an amanuensis, a secretary. Whatever - he was easily usable.

Concl: A series of words describes John Mark.

- (1) Minister, an attendant, an under-servant.
- (2) Apostate - from Paul.
- (3) Fellow worker
- (4) Comfort
- (5) Profitable

Was this all? No! This was the man who wrote "The Gospel According

to mark". Historical evidence is abundant that he was the writer and that he wrote for the Romans.

But there are two significant things about the Gospel: Both show the influence of these experiences we have traced in the life of John Mark.

(1) This is really the Gospel according to Peter, because it is quite certain that ~~Mark~~ <sup>Mark</sup> got his material from Peter. So his very first title, an under-rower, showed how God's place for him was actual preparation for his <sup>greatest</sup> life work: the writing of the Gospel for the Romans. Possibly his jealousy for Barnabas was a reflection of his own.

(2) How does he present the Lord Jesus?

As a servant.

no one could do this quite as well as one whose place in life was to be like that of his saviour. As he himself states in Mark 10:45 (cf. v. 42-45):

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

What a testimony to us! We have not record of any message he preached.

We do not know about his converts - who they were, or how many!

What we have here is a man who became like His Master, a servant of men, and who gave his life assisting others in proclaiming the Word.

But - only eternity will reveal how many are in heaven because of having heard of the Saviour through "the Gospel according to Mark" - not St. Mark, but servant Mark.