**Mark**

1. *Introduction*:

Of the four Gospels Mark gives the most concise account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

2. *Authorship*:

The author’s full name is John Mark. He is mentioned eight times in the rest of the New Testament. His father is never mentioned. His mother was one of several New Testament women named Mary. She was a wealthy follower of Jesus who lived in a large house in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).

3. *Background*:

A very early tradition outside the New Testament tells that Mark traveled much with Peter, and that, at the request of the people of the church, he wrote the things which Peter told concerning Jesus. His account begins with the events Peter witnessed and does not tell of the birth and early life of Jesus.

4. *Points of Interest*

--In the early days of the church Mark had the nickname: *stumpy-fingered*. This may refer either to a physical peculiarity on the part of the author or to some strange stylistic features of his Gospel.

--Of the sixteen chapters in the book, six are devoted to the final week of Jesus’ life.

--To reduce opposition until His mission was complete, Jesus repeatedly told people not to say anything about His identity or what miracles He had done.

--Jesus used parables as coded messages to His followers—messages hidden from His opponents.

--The oldest manuscripts conclude the Gospel of Mark with the women running from the tomb, too afraid to tell anyone what they had discovered (Mark 16:8). The longer ending appears in the majority of manuscripts.

--Mark records over half of Christ’s thirty-five miracles, the highest proportion in the Gospels.

5. *A Brief Outline of Mark*:

Chapters

1:1-13 Jesus’ preparation for His ministry

1:14-2:12 Early works and miracles

2:13-6:5 Actions and attitudes which set Him apart from the religious leaders of His day

6:6-13:37 The main period of His ministry

14:1-15:47 Opposition, leading to the Crucifixion

16:1-20 The Resurrection, appearances, and Commission

5. April Reading Guide

Week of March 27-Apr 2 Mark 1-4

Week of April 3-9 Mark 5-7

Week of April 10-16 Mark 8-10

Week of April 17-23 Mark 11-13

Week of April 24-30 Mark 14-16