Subject: Survey--The Gospel of Mark
Posted by william on Sat, 13 Sep 2008 04:22:33 GMT
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Not sure if this would be better in the book section or here, I guess I can move it later if someone starts an in-depth study of Mark or at least use it to introduce Mark. I hope others will upload their notes... remember, they don't need to be perfect, exhaustive or even complete...(if we wait for that this area will never take off.) Maybe as we go along everything will be fleshed out, especially if you aren't shy in sharing. Almost all of my stuff has been done on the fly; I haven't prepared it like I would prepare a book. My purpose in this note is to motivate!

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I think there are many different ways that people learn so we shouldn't automatically think that what works well for one will work for others.

Personally, I like to get the big picture first and then focus closer on the details; this keeps me (hopefully) from taking things out of context. For example, I'm studying the Gospel of Mark. I started a while back and have read it through three or four times. To me, when I re-read the book I'm studying, I never fail to see things that I've missed in past readings. If you can it is best to read the whole book at one sitting.

After the first reading or so, I like to read an overview of the book to get some of the background. I've got a ton of stuff I use, things like Unger's Bible Handbook (Halley has a good one), J. Sidlow Baxter's Explore the Book (one of my favorites!)etc.. In addition, all of my commentaries have a brief overview of each book before they get into individual verses. I like the old timers -- Matthew Henry, Clarke's, etc.. I then read the book again with the background information and insight about the author, date, purpose, in mind.

It is a good idea to find logical divisions in the book by attempting an outline, or use one provided by the overview material you've read.

Mark has a distinct dividing line in chapter 8:31. The tone of the book changes dramatically at this point.

Studying a book is like looking at the book with a camera that has telescopic lens. First get the big picture, and then focus the camera a little closer by looking at the major divisions. Focus a little closer and you'll see more detail. The beauty of doing a study this way is you are at all times letting the text speak.

Expository preachers do this all of the time. We often think that expository preaching focuses on the details of a particular verse, or maybe even a particular word in the verse, but expository

preaching/teaching can be done on whole chunks of Scripture at a time... what makes it "expository" is when you let the verse/chapter/book, speak its message.

If I were preaching on the book of Mark, the first thing I would attempt to convey is the character of the book-- and the character is one of "ACTION!" I would title the book "MARK!" and explain the exclamatory nature of the book! Just read the first chapter and you will be overwhelmed with the speed of the action line! One can barely take a breath between verses! The book doesn't focus much on what Jesus taught but on what He DID! If you lose count of the telephone poles that are blurring past like a picket fence--DON'T WORRY!--you can CATCH IT ON THE NEXT READING!

Then abruptly, a change takes place in 8:31 and the discerning reader becomes aware of another, seemingly contradictory, thread that is destined to derail the progress of what seems to be coronation of the King and restoration of His Kingdom. One can almost feel the denseness of the disciples as Jesus attempts to reveal the true purpose of His mission--the fact that He must first fulfill the prophecy of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 before He can be crowned as King of Israel.

But if they were slow in understanding, it didn't take them long to embrace the ultimate purpose of their training found at the end of the book:

Mar 16:15-18 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
Mar 16:19-20 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Anyway, I've got a long way to go, but those are some of the results of my overview study.

Studying the Bible can be exciting but it can also be laboriousâ€¦ donâ€™t give up if it seems to be a dry exercise for a period of time, keep going and you will eventually be rewarded with blessing!

William