

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God**

#### **Part I: Valuing Mark's Exaltation Of Jesus As God's Perfect Servant In Light Of Mark's Biography (Acts 15:36-40 with 2 Timothy 4:11b et al.)**

##### **I. Introduction**

- A. Mark wrote his gospel "in Rome primarily for Gentile Roman Christians" that they might "catch afresh its implications for their lives in a dissolute and often hostile environment," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 99-100.
- B. The author's focus is on the role of Christ as God's Servant "divested of all official dignity, save that of consecration to His work," G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospel According To Mark, 1928, p. 9.
- C. Such a focus to such readers arises from Mark's own testimony, leading us followers of Christ to see our need to heed God in service *perfectly* in **unqualified obedience** as Jesus served the Father (as follows):

##### **II. Valuing Mark's Exaltation Of Jesus As God's Perfect Servant In Light Of Mark's Biography.**

- A. The author of Mark's Gospel is the John Mark of Scripture who was closely associated with notable believers: his mother Mary was a wealthy woman who owned a large Jerusalem home fit for hosting many believers in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:12; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 59; Ibid., Morgan, p. 7), Mark was also a cousin of Barnabas who was called of God to go with the Apostle Paul on his first missionary journey (Col. 4:10 NIV with Acts 13:13) and 1 Peter 5:3 reveals the Apostle Peter led John Mark to faith in Jesus Christ.
- B. However, coming from a privileged home and thus unexposed to much hardship, in his first effort to serve the Lord, John Mark left the ministry due to hardship and returned home to Jerusalem, Acts 13:13 with 15:37-38. Scripture does not reveal what specific issue(s) led to Mark's defeat, but scholars offer the following ideas:
  - 1. Mark may have been "disillusioned with the change in leadership" from cousin Barnabas to Paul that is seen in the switch of the order of the apostles' names in Acts 13:2 and 13:13, Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 388.
  - 2. Some hold that Paul's new emphasis on Gentiles was too much for a Palestinian Jew like John Mark, Ibid.
  - 3. Others think he may have become afraid of the dangerous road over the Taurus Mountains to Antioch, a road Paul was determined to take in his journey, Ibid.
  - 4. "There is some evidence Paul became quite ill in Perga, possibly with malaria, as the city . . . was subject to malarial infections," Ibid., upsetting John Mark who had come from a sheltered home of privilege, Ibid.
- C. Accordingly, when Paul and Barnabas later planned a second missionary journey to visit believers they had led to Christ, Paul strongly objected to Barnabas' desire to take John Mark along with them, Acts 15:36-38.
- D. The contention between them became so great, they parted company, with Barnabas taking John Mark with him back to his home on the Island of Cyprus likely further to disciple him (Acts 15:39 with Acts 4:36) while Paul took Silas on his second missionary trip to see believers he and Barnabas had led to Christ, Acts 15:40.
- E. When Paul later wrote his epistle to the Colossians, at Colossians 4:10, he notified his readers about John Mark's possible visit to them, mentioning special instructions about him. John Mark was on the rebound in the realm of Christian service, and was likely being monitored by Paul and others for future ministerial approval.
- F. Just before his martyrdom, the Apostle Paul in prison wrote to Timothy about John Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11, telling Timothy to bring him with him when he came to see Paul, for John Mark was at that time "useful" (*euchrestos*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 329-330) to Paul in regards to "service" (*diakonia*, Ibid., p. 183) This word *diakonia* is also used of the office of deacon in Romans 12:7, and is derived from the word *diakonos*, meaning "deacon, **servant**," Ibid., p. 183-184.
- G. In the context, this was a great rebound victory for John Mark: he had learned *truly* to **serve** the Lord despite the threat of identifying publicly with a Roman prisoner like Paul who was condemned to die, cf. 2 Timothy 4:6, and to help Paul, the man who had supplanted his cousin and apostle Barnabas as missionary team leader, which leadership shift may have led to John Mark's initial departure from the ministry at Perga in Acts 13:13!
- H. This John Mark thus upheld Jesus in his Gospel as God's **Perfect Servant**, calling Gentile Roman believers with privileged backgrounds in Rome like his own to obey God's assignments with **unqualified obedience!**

***Lesson:*** *Mark's exaltation of Jesus as God's Perfect Servant Who served the Father with unqualified obedience grew out of his own victory over unsatisfactory, qualified obedience due to a sheltered, privileged background, and his victory came by God's grace through faith in his personal walk. John Mark intended for his Christian readers to learn follow Jesus' example as he had learned -- in unqualified obedience to the Father.*

***Application:*** *May we who know the Lord, regardless of life's difficulties, serve Him with unqualified obedience!*