

Explorations in the Gospel of Mark

TSN007

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEMINAR

This is what it says in the *Programma degli Studi*

In this seminar we will seek to gain a deeper understanding into the Gospel of Mark. We will study particular texts using literary, narrative, rhetorical sociological and historical exegetical methods to gain a greater insight into the composition and purpose of the Gospel, and in particular to understand the presentation of Jesus within the Gospel and the message about the Christian life that the author wished to communicate to his audience.

To expand on this slightly, my aim for this seminar is basically twofold. Firstly, and most obviously, I aim to deepen our knowledge and understanding of this sometimes enigmatic Gospel. Secondly, and hand in hand with this, I aim to broaden and deepen our appreciation and understanding of the many different and complementary ways of approaching a biblical text. Thus in this seminar we will explore both the Gospel itself, and the various different methods of exegesis.

Apart from the text of Mark itself, two books will be our constant companion. The first is Donahue and Harrington's 2002 commentary on Mark in the Sacra Pagina Series. It will be in any good theological library, but I would recommend purchasing it as it will always be a useful resource. The second is the 1993 PBC document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. This is available online or in print form – I particularly recommend the *Text and Commentary* published by Joseph Fitzmyer in 1995 – Subsidia Biblica 18, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, and available from the Greg Bookshop.

I also have a website – www.amilner.org – on which there is additional material and links to useful resources. I will add to these as the seminar progresses. (NB the website is 'down' at the time of writing – I will seek to 'resurrect' it soon)

OUTLINE OF THE SEMINAR

We have 11 weeks at our disposal. I will use them as follows

Week 1 – introduction.

Including a look at *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, reflection on our experience of Mark's gospel so far, and an overview of the literature on Mark's gospel.

Week 2 – Reading the Gospel as a whole

We will spend the whole session reading Mark's Gospel out loud – in my experience that takes about 1½ hours. We are used to hearing the Gospels in small chunks. However that means we miss the overall narrative sweep. The Gospels were written to be read out loud and as an entire narrative. We will seek to recapture that experience to some degree.

Weeks 3-10 A closer reading of the Gospel

Each week we will take two sections (usually two chapters), one in each session. Each of you will be expected to present on one section during the course of the semester. The format of each session will be as follows.

1. A **brief** introduction to the section by the student (5 minutes – just for context and for any particular observations)
2. An exposition by the student of a passage of their choice in the section from a particular perspective (20 minutes). This should be accompanied by a **single sheet of A4** outlining your ideas and giving relevant bibliographical references. The length of the chosen passage will depend somewhat on the type of analysis you are seeking to give. For example a detailed philological study might focus on one verse or even one phrase; a narrative analysis will inevitably mean looking at a larger passage – a whole episode; a socio-cultural analysis might pick up one aspect of a particular passage.
3. Class discussion of the passage (15 minutes). You will be expected to be able to comment on the passage explored from the perspective of your **chosen commentary** (see below)
4. Summing up by me – with hints at alternative perspectives not yet mentioned if appropriate. (5 minutes)

Week 11

The ‘alternative endings’ to Mark and summing up, including reflecting back on our study of the gospel so far and what we have learnt, both about the Gospel and about Exegesis..

Chosen Commentary

As well as reading the gospel of Mark, you are expected to choose a commentary on Mark’s Gospel and have read the relevant section before each class. You need to have chosen your commentary by the time we start working through the Gospel in week 3 – I will ask which commentary you have chosen at the beginning of that class. You should bring your chosen commentary to class with you if possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

Below is a list of books I have access to either in my own collection or in the English College Library, and so is indicative of the range of books available on Mark with which I am familiar. The list includes a few more general works. *Works which take the form of a commentary are marked with an asterisk. Your own library may reveal other useful titles. This list may be supplemented with my list of the book reviews that can be found on www.bookreviews.org. This document is posted on line on my website as it contains links to summaries and reviews of a range of books on Mark. There is some overlap between the two lists. Another website of note is www.ntgateway.com/mark which has links to a few online commentaries and also a number of useful studies. The New Testament Gateway site, of which this forms a part, is generally a very useful resource.

- Anderson, J. C. & S. D. Moore *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* Augsburg, Minneapolis 2008
- *Aquinas, T. *Catena Aurea, Vol 2: The Gospel of Mark* Tr. J. H Newman, Cosimo Classics, New York, 2007 (originally published 1845)
- Aune, D. E. *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1987
- Benedict XVI *Jesus of Nazareth* Doubleday, (2 vols), New York, 2007, 2011
- Best, E. *Following Jesus: Discipleship in Mark's Gospel*, Sheffield University Press, 1981
- Mark: The Gospel as Story*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1983
- *Broadhead, E. K. *Mark*, Sheffield 2001
- *Cahill, M. (tr & ed.) *The First Commentary on Mark: An Annotated Translation*, Oxford University Press, 1998
- Cárdenas Pallares, J. *A Poor Man Called Jesus: Reflections on the Gospel of Mark* Orbis, New York, 1986
- *Collins, A. Y. *Mark: A Commentary* Hermeneia, Fortress, Minneapolis, 2007
- *Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Gospel According to St Mark* Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary, CUP, 1966
- *Donahue, R & D. J Harrington *Sacra Pagina 2: The Gospel of Mark*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2002
- Dura, N.W., T. Okure & D. M. Pate (eds.) *Marrk. texts@contexts*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 2011.
- Dunn, J. D. G. *Jesus Remembered*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003
- *Evans, C. A. *WBC 34b Mark 8:27-16:20*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 2001
- Farmer, W. R. *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, Cambridge University Press, 1974
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- Fowler, R. M. *Let the Reader Understand: Reader Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark*, TPI, Harrisburg, 1996
- *Graffy, A. *Take and Read - The Gospel of Mark*, Mathew James, Chelmsford, 2005
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- Harrington, W. J. *Mark, Realistic Theologian: The Jesus of Mark*, Columba, Dublin 2002
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- *Hooker, M. *The Gospel According to Mark*, Black, London, 1991
- *van Iersel, B. *Reading Mark*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1989
- Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* T&T Clark, New York, 1998
- *LaVediere, E. *The Beginning of the Gospel: Introducing the Gospel according to Mark* (2 vols), Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1999
- Levine, A. *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, Sheffield 2001
- *McGann, D. *The Journeying Self: The Gospel of Mark Through a Jungian Perspective* Paulist Press, New York, 1985

- *McKenna, M. *On Your Mark: Reading Mark in the Shadow of the Cross* Orbis, Maryknoll, 2006
- *Malbon, E. S. *Hearing Mark: A Listener's Guide* TPI, Harrisburg, 2002
- Malbon, E. S. (ed.) *Between Author and Audience in Mark, Narration, Characterisation, Interpretation* Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009
- *Marcus, J. *Mark* (2 vols) Anchor Bible, Yale, Newhaven, 2007 & 2009
- Martin, R. P. *Mark – Evangelist & Theologian* Paternoster, Exeter, 1972
- Meynet, R. *Una Nuova Introduzione ai Vangeli Sinotici*, EDB, Bologna, 2006
- Moloney, F. J. *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* Hendrickson, Peabody, 2004
- *Myers, C. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* 20th anniversary edition, Orbis, Maryknoll, 2008.
- Myers, C. et. al. *Say to this Mountain: Mark's Story of Discipleship* Orbis, Maryknoll, 1996
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- *Oden, T C & A Hall (eds) *Ancient Christian Commentary of Scripture, New Testament II: Mark* Fitzroy Dearborn, Chicago, 1998
- Pettersen, N.R., (ed.) *Perspectives on Mark's Gospel*, Semeia 16 (1979)
- Quesnell, Q. *The Mind of Mark: Interpretation and Method through the Exegesis of Mark 6,32* Analecta Biblica 38, PBI, Rome 1969
- Räisänen, H. *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel*, T & T Clarke, Edinburgh, 1990
- Rhoads, D. *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 2004
- Rhoads, D., J. Dewey & D. Michie *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* Fortress, Minneapolis, 2009
- Robbins, V.K., *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 2009
- Ross, S, *Marked* (Graphic novel) Seabury, New York, 2005.
- Roetzel, C. J. *The World that Shaped the New Testament* WJK, Louisville, 2003
- *Schweizer, E. *The Good news According to Mark*, SPCK, London, 1970
- Shiner, W. *Proclaiming the Gospel: First Century Performance of Mark*, TPI, Harrisburg, 2003
- *Struthers Malbon, E. *Hearing Mark: A Listeners Guide*, TPI, Harrisburg, 2002
- *Sweetland, D. *Mark: From Death to Life*, New City Press, New York, 2000
- *Taylor, V. *The Gospel According To St. Mark*, MacMillan, London, 1955
- Telford, W. (ed.) *The Interpretation of Mark*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1985
- Mark* T&T Clark, London, 1997
- Tolbert, M. A. *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical perspective*
- Tuckett, C. (ed.) *The Messianic Secret*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1983
- *Witherington III, Ben *The Gospel of Mark, A Socio-rhetorical commentary*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001
- *Wright, T. *Mark for Everyone*, SPCK, London, 2001

A NOTE ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

As you are aware, there are many different translations of the Bible, and all have their strengths and weaknesses. You should bring a bible to class. I don't mind which translation you bring, especially as a variety of translations can be useful in appreciating the variety of interpretations of the Gospel. Every translation is of course an interpretation. If your Greek is good enough, I would strongly recommend the use of the Greek text alongside your translation – either GNT4 or NA27 (which both have the same text but different apparatus and occasional variations in punctuation). If you are not going to make regular use of the Greek text you should make sure you have access to a translation which is basically literal in character and based on NA27 or its predecessors – I recommend the RSV, the NRSV or the NASB. The latter is particularly literal in its approach, although it occasionally betrays its conservative evangelical foundations in some of its translation choices. I will normally have my tablet with me which gives me access to a dozen English translations, as well as the Vulgate and the Greek. Electronic Bible programs are very useful. I use the Logos system and have built up a substantial library over the years, including some good Catholic resources.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH

Published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1993

The Pontifical Biblical Commission desires to indicate the paths most appropriate for arriving at an interpretation of the Bible as faithful as possible to its character both human and divine. The commission does not aim to adopt a position on all the questions which arise with respect to the Bible such as, for example, the theology of inspiration. What it has in mind is to examine all the methods likely to contribute effectively to the task of making more available the riches contained in the biblical texts. The aim is that the word of God may become more and more the spiritual nourishment of the members of the people of God, the source for them of a life of faith, of hope and of love--and indeed a light for all humanity (cf. *DV* 21).

From the Introduction

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