

## **Saint Mark the Evangelist**

Saint Mark's feast day is celebrated on April 25th every year. The very first Gospel is attributed to Saint Mark. It is Mark who was Saint Peter's interpreter and had written down accurately all that he had remembered. The Mark or John Mark that is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and in the writings of Saint Paul is believed to be the Evangelist Mark.

Mark was said to be the son of the woman in whose house the disciples often met, see Acts 12:12, and also the missionary companion of both Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Acts 13:5 and 1 Peter 5:13.

According to Paul, Mark was a Jewish cousin of Barnabas whom Paul did not rate very highly because he deserted him and Barnabas, Acts 13:1 and Acts 15:37-9. But was later reconciled with him as Mark was in Rome when Paul was in prison, Col. 4:10. Tradition has usually identified the writer of the Gospel of Mark as the young man who fled naked during the arrest of Jesus, Mark 14:51-2. Another legend makes Mark as one of the seventy-two disciplines sent out by Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark was the first of the Synoptic Gospels to be written, around 65-70. Written to a non-Palestinian audience or at least to a non-Jewish audience. The structure and teaching of Mark's Gospel is very straightforward. It is arranged as a continuous narrative and the outline of the events are similar to the speeches of Peter and Paul that are reported in Acts. Because of this we the readers come closest to the historical figure of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

Mark devotes a third of the Gospel to a single week in the life of Jesus, the final week spent in Jerusalem and ending with his passion, death and resurrection. Mark's entire Gospel is to get people to make a decision about Jesus, who he is.

The very first line of the Gospel tells this very clearly; "The beginning of the good news about Jesus, Messiah, Son of God." (Mark 1:1). Then the middle of the Gospel has Peter's declaration in chapter 8:29; "You are the Messiah." And Mark's Gospel ends with Centurion declaring, "Truly this man was the Son of God." (Mark 15:39).

All the readers of Mark's Gospel are forced to make a decision of who is Jesus, and then the decision to follow Jesus.

The winged Lion is used to depict Saint Mark or having a lion next to Mark in the representation of the Gospels.