

Episode: Acts Series No. 6

Narrator: John Mark

Primary Scriptures: Acts 13

Story Summary: John Mark's story, start of the First Missionary Journey

Location: Roman Empire; Jerusalem, Antioch, Cyprus

Time: 30 AD Death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Pentecost.

46 AD Paul's "famine" visit to Jerusalem, start of First Missionary Journey

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13-14

The Scriptures give us only short, direct references about John Mark, but it is possible to infer many things about him that are likely to be representative of his life. Part of the inferences come from knowing that Jerusalem was a small city where the Christians knew each other and often interacted.

Acts 12:12-13 says that after Peter was released from jail, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. When Peter knocked at the door, a servant answered and recognized Peter's voice. From just this short passage, we can infer from the very big house and servants that John Mark's mother was wealthy and that, since her house was well-known to the Christians as a central gathering place, their family had likely been Christians for a long time. If the family was wealthy, John Mark was likely well-educated and knew many of the other wealthy people in Jerusalem, especially the Jewish leaders.

The next passage illustrates the importance of searching all the Scriptures about a topic instead of just the ones currently in front of you. Colossians 4:10 says that Mark is a cousin (or relative) of Barnabas, and in that same verse, Paul tells the Colossians to welcome Mark if he comes to them. Paul wrote this passage many years after the First Missionary Journey, so you can infer from it that Mark somehow ended up in Paul's good graces. We are not sure how that happened, but it is fun to speculate that John Mark's training under Barnabas had a big influence.

John Mark later became known as Mark, and he is typically credited with writing the New Testament book of *Mark*. He was not an original apostle.

Discussion Questions:

1. When is the first possible reference to John Mark?
 2. Why did Barnabas have a special interest in John Mark?
 3. Why do you think John Mark abandoned the First Missionary Journey?
 4. Did John Mark write the *Gospel of John*?
 5. What did wealth probably give John Mark access to?
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1. Rich young ruler? When Jesus chose his mother's house? When the young man ran away on the night of Jesus' betrayal? 2. They were relatives – probably cousins, but possibly uncle/nephew. 3. He was scared and homesick, he was bored, he was upset that Paul took over leadership from Barnabas, he was not used to a hard lifestyle, he didn't like the uncertainty of not knowing what was going to happen next. 4. No, but he wrote the *Gospel of Mark*, possibly under the influence of Peter. 5. A large house, travel money, money for support of church, a good education, access to other wealthy and influential people.

Application Questions:

1. When John Mark left for the First Missionary Journey, he probably thought that being a "good" Christian was enough to succeed. As he reflected on his failure, what do you think he might have wished to have had? What would help you avoid failures in your life?
2. One of John Mark's invaluable assets was being around educated and influential people. What do you learn from the people you are around? Could you learn more if you chose to be around other kinds of people?
3. What did John Mark learn from being around the influential church leaders? What could you learn from being around your church leaders?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. John Mark was very possibly a teen when he started the First Missionary Journey with Barnabas and Paul. When the going got tough, he quit (a failing he eventually overcame). Can you name a time in your life when you quit something because it was too difficult to finish? What can you do to keep from doing so in the future.
2. John Mark probably grew up in a well-to-do family. He very likely felt entitled. How does a feeling of entitlement affect someone's actions? Can someone with that feeling be a good servant to Jesus?
3. John Mark's failure and restoration were key components of the work he did for the Lord. What lessons can you learn from your failures? In what ways do you need to work toward restoration?