

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Session 25, Theology of Mark Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Jennings, Mark, Session 25, Theology of Mark, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mark Jennings' Lecture 25, "The Theology of Mark," explores the central question of Jesus' identity as presented in the Gospel of Mark. The lecture examines key Christological titles attributed to Jesus, including **Son of God, Messiah, and Son of Man**, analyzing how Mark portrays Jesus through these designations. Jennings highlights **Mark's "enacted Christology,"** where Jesus' divine authority is demonstrated through his powerful words, healings, and miracles. Finally, the lecture discusses **Mark's atonement theology**, emphasizing the necessity and salvific purpose of Jesus' suffering and death as a ransom and the establishment of a new covenant.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Jennings, Mark, Session 25 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Mark).



Jennings_Mark_Session25.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Jennings, Session 25, Theology of Mark

Briefing Document: The Theology of Mark (Based on Dr. Mark Jennings' Lecture)

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main theological themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Mark Jennings in his concluding lecture on the Gospel of Mark. Dr. Jennings draws upon his extensive study of the book and acknowledges the influence of several key scholars, including Mark Strauss, Ben Witherington III, James Edwards, Robert Stein, R.T. France, and particularly David Garland's "A Theology of the Gospel of Mark." The lecture primarily focuses on the **Christology** and **atonement theology** of Mark, arguing that the Gospel aims to answer the central question: "**Who is Jesus?**"

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Central Question: Who is Jesus?

- Jennings emphasizes that the entire Gospel of Mark is structured around answering the fundamental question of Jesus' identity.
- Mark begins with a triumphant proclamation: "Jesus is the Son of God." This sets the tone that the Gospel is good news and not a tragedy.
- While other figures appear, their significance is solely based on their relationship to Jesus.

2. Christology of Mark:

- **Son of God:** This is presented as the primary title for Jesus in Mark.
- The title appears in introductory comments (Mark 1:1).
- God's voice from heaven declares Jesus as his beloved Son at the baptism (Mark 1:11) and transfiguration (Mark 9:7): "**you are my Son whom I love,**" or "**this is my Son whom I love.**"
- The centurion's confession at the crucifixion, "**surely this man was the Son of God,**" is highlighted as a pivotal moment towards which the narrative builds.
- Demons also acknowledge Jesus as "the Son of the Most High," and the high priest asks, "are you the Son of the Blessed One?"

- Jennings notes the literary tension created by the "messianic secret," where the proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God is often suppressed until the cross.
- He draws a connection between the tearing of the heavens at Jesus' baptism and the tearing of the temple veil at his death, suggesting these events "are bookends of the earthly ministry of Jesus."
- Jesus implicitly claims the title in the parable of the tenants (Mark 12:1-12), referring to himself as the "beloved" son sent by the landowner.
- Other references include Jesus' statement about the Son not knowing the time of the end (Mark 13:32) and his use of "Abba" (Mark 14).
- Jennings stresses the link between Jesus' Sonship and the necessity of his suffering and death.
- **Messiah (Christ):** While identified early in the Gospel (Mark 1:1), this title appears to be "problematic" in Mark.
- Five out of six uses of the title come from those hostile to or misunderstanding Jesus.
- Jesus himself does not overtly embrace the title, though he doesn't outright reject it.
- Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8) and the high priest's question (Mark 14) are key instances.
- The connection to the "Son of David" (Bartimaeus in Mark 10) and Jesus' correction in Mark 12 regarding Psalm 110:1 indicate that the common understanding of Messiah as simply a descendant of David was insufficient.
- Jennings believes Jesus embraces the title, evidenced by the triumphal entry (Zechariah 9 reference), signifying his deliberate entry as king. Even Pilate's charge ("king of the Jews") suggests Jesus acted in a way that supported this claim.
- The problem lies in the flawed understanding of the title, which Jesus seeks to redefine through his suffering.
- **Son of Man:** This title is exclusively used by Jesus in Mark.
- No one else in the Gospel addresses him with this title.

- Jennings argues that this title draws from Daniel 7 and the figure of "one like the Son of Man."
- Examples include Jesus speaking of the Son of Man coming in glory with angels (Mark 8:38), coming in the clouds with power (Mark 13:26), and coming on the clouds of heaven (Mark 14:62).
- The "vagueness" of this title allowed Jesus to define it without the preconceived political notions associated with "Messiah."
- It captures the "dichotomy" of Jesus as the powerful one who will also suffer.
- Jesus uses this title in contexts of authority (forgiving sins, authority over the Sabbath, judgment) and suffering (rejection, death).
- **Enacted Christology:** Beyond specific titles, Mark presents Jesus' identity through his actions and words, often echoing the Scriptures.
- **Power in his voice:** His call to disciples was immediate, suggesting divine authority similar to God's call to Abraham in Genesis 12.
- His command over demons was absolute and immediate, showcasing his supreme authority over the spiritual realm. The crowds' amazement at this authority is a recurring theme.
- The destruction of Legion demonstrates the full extent of his power.
- **Power to heal:** Healings brought immediate restoration (fever), addressed incurable diseases (leprosy), symbolized forgiveness (paralytic), and conquered death (Jairus' daughter).
- Jennings sees the healing of the blind, deaf, lame, and mute as a fulfillment of Isaiah 35:4-6, signifying Jesus' divine authority to undo the effects of the fall.
- **Divine miracles:** Feeding of the thousands (both Jewish and Gentile audiences) suggests an eschatological banquet (Ezekiel 34, Psalm 23).
- Power over the storm (Mark 4) demonstrates creative power belonging to God (Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah 43).
- Walking on water is evidence of God's presence (Job 9, Job 38, Psalm 77, Isaiah 43).
- **Authority in teaching:** Jesus taught with an authority unlike the scribes, not merely interpreting the law but revealing its divine intent.

- His rulings on the Sabbath, purity laws, dietary laws, divorce, and the greatest commandment demonstrate this.
- This "active, muscular Christology" portrays Jesus as one who has and acts with God's authority.

3. Atonement Theology:

- Mark's Christology is intrinsically linked to his understanding of atonement.
- Jennings highlights the "divine must" (δεῖ) in Jesus' passion predictions (Mark 8:31, Mark 9, Mark 10), indicating that his suffering and death were part of God's predetermined plan.
- Jesus' death is not accidental but a fulfillment of divine will.
- The reference at the Last Supper, "the Son of Man will go just as it is written about him," is significant, even though no specific scripture is cited. Jennings suggests this likely refers to the **suffering servant** passages in Isaiah, particularly Isaiah 53 (which he quotes at length).
- The crucifixion is presented not as defeat but as a simultaneous display of God's justice and mercy, the Father's will and the Son's obedience, and ultimately a victory and "coronation moment" that brings salvation.
- Two explicit statements about the salvific benefit of Jesus' death are crucial:
- **Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** This emphasizes the substitutionary nature of Jesus' death as an "exchange price" for the freedom of others, echoing Isaiah 53.
- **Mark 14:24 (Last Supper): "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."** This connects Jesus' death to the Exodus narrative and the sealing of the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34, where God promises forgiveness of sins. Jesus' blood replaces the animal sacrifices of the old covenant.
- On the cross, Jesus received the full wrath of God (cup imagery in Gethsemane), achieving the divine will to remove the wickedness of sinners through his vicarious suffering and death.
- The irony of the mocking crowd who said Jesus saved others but couldn't save himself is that by enduring the cross, he *was* saving others.

Conclusion:

Dr. Jennings concludes that Mark's Gospel powerfully explicates who Jesus is: the Stronger One who suffered. He encourages listeners to deepen their faith and to be able to confess, like the centurion, **"surely this man was the Son of God."**

Key Quotes:

- "The Gospel of Mark is, at its heart, a book that seeks to answer one question. Who is Jesus?"
- "Mark begins his Gospel with a proclamation announcing the good news, announcing that Jesus is the Son of God."
- "Without question, the title Son of God is one of, if not the main title for Jesus in the Gospel of Mark."
- (Regarding baptism and centurion's confession) "...these two are bookends of the earthly ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark."
- (Mark 1:11 & 9:7) "you are my Son whom I love," or "this is my Son whom I love."
- (Mark 15:39) "surely this man was the Son of God."
- "Peter's confession in Mark 8 is incomplete because it lacks an understanding of Jesus' death."
- "The Messiah we see comes into important moments, such as Mark 8, when Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah."
- "Son of Man only appears from Jesus."
- (Mark 8:38) "...the Son of Man who will come in his Father's glory with holy angels..."
- (Mark 13:26) "Jesus says that he will come in the clouds with great power and glory..."
- (Mark 14:62) "...coming on the clouds of heaven..."
- "Garland, in his book, also describes what he calls an enacted Christology in Mark. I really like this term."
- "Jesus calls much in the same way that God calls, that there is an authority in his voice."

- (Mark 8:31) "...the Son of Man must suffer many things..."
- (Mark 10:45) "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- (Mark 14:24) "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many..."
- "In Mark's Gospel, we have a powerful explication of who Jesus is and what his coming meant. He is the Stronger One who suffered."

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of Dr. Jennings' lecture on the theology of Mark, highlighting the central role of Christology and atonement in understanding the Gospel's message.

4. Study Guide: Jennings, Session 25, Theology of Mark

The Theology of Mark: A Study Guide

Key Scholars Mentioned:

- Mark Strauss
- Ben Witherington III
- James Edwards
- Robert Stein
- R.T. France
- David Garland

Central Question of Mark's Gospel:

- Who is Jesus?

Key Themes:

- **Christology:** The study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Mark presents Jesus as the Son of God, Messiah, and Son of Man, emphasizing his identity as the stronger one who suffered and died to save his people.
- **Son of God:** Mark highlights this title from the beginning, with God's voice at the baptism and transfiguration, the centurion's confession, and even demonic pronouncements. The full realization of Jesus' Sonship is linked to the cross.
- **Messiah (Christ):** While used early in the Gospel, this title becomes problematic due to misunderstandings of its meaning. Jesus embraces the essence of the title (greater than David, the kingly entry) but redefines it beyond mere political expectations.
- **Son of Man:** Primarily used by Jesus himself, this title draws from Daniel 7 and signifies Jesus as the eschatological, apocalyptic figure with authority and the necessity of suffering. Its vagueness allowed Jesus to define it according to his mission.
- **Enacted Christology:** Mark portrays Jesus' identity through his powerful actions and words, echoing Old Testament themes. This includes his authoritative voice in calling disciples and commanding demons, his power to heal, and his divine miracles.

- **Atonement Theology:** Jesus' suffering and death are not accidental but part of God's predetermined plan ("divine must"). His death is presented as a ransom (Mark 10:45) and the establishment of a new covenant through his blood (Mark 14:24), fulfilling scripture and demonstrating God's justice and mercy.
- **The Stronger One Who Suffered:** This encapsulates Mark's central portrayal of Jesus, whose power is revealed through his willingness to undergo suffering and death for the salvation of others.

Quiz:

1. According to Mark's Gospel, what is the fundamental question the author seeks to answer about Jesus? What is the initial tone Mark uses to present Jesus in his Gospel?
2. Describe two instances in Mark where God the Father explicitly declares Jesus as his Son. How does the centurion's declaration at the cross contribute to the understanding of Jesus as the Son of God in Mark?
3. Why does Jennings suggest that the title "Messiah" is a "problematic title" in the Gospel of Mark? Provide one example of how Jesus interacts with this title in the narrative.
4. What is the primary Old Testament background for Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man" in Mark? Give one example of how Jesus uses this title to describe his future or present role.
5. Explain the concept of "enacted Christology" in Mark's Gospel. Provide one specific example from the text to illustrate this concept.
6. According to the lecture, what does the phrase "divine must" refer to in the context of Mark's Gospel? How is this concept illustrated in Jesus' predictions about his suffering and death?
7. What Old Testament scripture does Jennings suggest is likely behind Jesus' statement at the Last Supper that the Son of Man will go "just as it is written about him"? Briefly describe a key connection between this scripture and Jesus' suffering.
8. What are the two explicit statements in Mark's Gospel that relate to the salvific benefit of Jesus' death? Briefly explain the significance of each of these statements in understanding Mark's atonement theology.

9. Explain the irony of the crowd's mockery of Jesus on the cross, according to the lecture. How does this irony relate to Mark's portrayal of Jesus as the "Stronger One"?
10. According to the conclusion of the lecture, what should be the ultimate response of believers when considering the life and death of Jesus as presented in Mark's Gospel?

Answer Key:

1. Mark's Gospel primarily seeks to answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" Mark begins his Gospel with a triumphant tone, announcing the good news that Jesus is the Son of God, emphasizing a joyful proclamation rather than tragedy.
2. God declares Jesus as his Son at his baptism (Mark 1:11) and at the transfiguration (Mark 9:7). The centurion's declaration, "Surely this man was the Son of God," occurring at the climax of Jesus' suffering on the cross, signifies the ultimate revelation of Jesus' true identity through his death.
3. The title "Messiah" is problematic because the common understanding of it had become primarily political and nationalistic, not aligning with Jesus' true mission of suffering and service. For example, after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah (Mark 8), Jesus immediately begins to teach about his impending suffering and death, correcting Peter's understanding.
4. The primary Old Testament background for the title "Son of Man" is Daniel 7, which describes a figure "like a son of man" coming with glory and authority. Jesus uses this title to speak of his future coming in glory with angels (Mark 8:38) and his authority in judgment (Mark 13:26, Mark 14:62).
5. "Enacted Christology" refers to Mark's method of revealing Jesus' identity not just through titles but through his powerful actions and authoritative words that often echo divine attributes or fulfill Old Testament prophecies. An example is Jesus' ability to heal various ailments (blindness, deafness, lameness, muteness), which Jennings connects to the prophecies of Isaiah 35:4-6 about God's restorative power.
6. The "divine must" refers to the idea that Jesus' suffering and death were not mere accidents but were part of God's predetermined plan and will. This is evident in Jesus' repeated predictions (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34) that the Son of Man *must* suffer, be rejected, and be killed.

7. Jennings suggests that Isaiah 53, the passage about the suffering servant, is likely the scripture Jesus refers to when saying the Son of Man will go "just as it is written about him." A key connection is the description in Isaiah 53 of the servant being despised, rejected, suffering for the transgressions of others, and ultimately dying, mirroring Jesus' own fate.
8. The two explicit statements regarding the salvific benefit of Jesus' death are Mark 10:45, where Jesus says he came "to give his life as a ransom for many," and Mark 14:24 at the Last Supper, where he says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." The former emphasizes Jesus' death as a purchase price for freedom, while the latter links his death to the establishment of a new covenant with forgiveness of sins.
9. The irony is that while the crowds mocked Jesus for being unable to save himself despite having saved others, it was precisely through his choice to endure the cross that he was actually saving others, fulfilling God's plan of atonement. This demonstrates that Jesus' strength was manifested in his willingness to suffer.
10. The ultimate response of believers, according to the lecture's conclusion, should be a deepened faith, leading them to be able to confess, like the centurion, "Surely this man was the Son of God," recognizing Jesus as the Stronger One who suffered for them.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of the "messianic secret" motif in Mark's Gospel in relation to the unfolding revelation of Jesus' identity as the Son of God. How does this literary device contribute to the impact of the centurion's confession at the cross?
2. Compare and contrast Mark's presentation of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of Man. What are the key characteristics associated with each title in the Gospel, and why might Jesus have preferred one over the other in describing himself?
3. Discuss the concept of "enacted Christology" in Mark's Gospel, providing multiple examples of how Jesus' actions and words demonstrate his divine authority and identity. How does this approach to Christology differ from simply listing his titles?
4. Explore the relationship between Christology and atonement theology in Mark's Gospel. How does Mark's portrayal of who Jesus is (the Son of God, the Stronger

One) necessitate and inform his understanding of why Jesus had to suffer and die?

5. Examine the significance of Old Testament allusions and fulfillments in Mark's portrayal of Jesus' identity and mission, particularly in relation to the suffering servant and the new covenant. Provide specific examples of how Mark connects Jesus to these Old Testament themes.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Christology:** The branch of Christian theology that studies the nature, person, and work of Jesus Christ.
- **Messiah (Christ):** The anointed one, a Hebrew term (Messiah) with a Greek equivalent (Christos). In Jewish tradition, it referred to the anticipated king and deliverer of Israel.
- **Son of God:** A title used in various ways in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament, it uniquely refers to Jesus as the divine Son of God, possessing a unique relationship with the Father.
- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently used for himself, drawing from Daniel 7, emphasizing both his humanity and his eschatological role as a figure of authority and judgment, and also his suffering.
- **Pericope:** A short passage or story in the Gospels, often used as a unit for study.
- **Messianic Secret:** A motif in Mark's Gospel where Jesus often commands his followers and those he heals to remain silent about his identity.
- **Enacted Christology:** The presentation of Jesus' identity and divinity through his actions, miracles, and authoritative teaching, rather than solely through explicit titles.
- **Atonement:** The reconciliation between God and humanity through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.
- **Ransom:** The price paid to secure the release of a captive. In Mark 10:45, Jesus' life is presented as a ransom for many.
- **New Covenant:** The agreement established between God and humanity through Jesus Christ, replacing the old covenant established with Israel through Moses, characterized by forgiveness of sins and a direct relationship with God.

5. FAQs on Jennings, Mark, Session 25, Theology of Mark, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Theology of Mark

1. What is the central question the Gospel of Mark seeks to answer, according to Dr. Jennings?

According to Dr. Jennings, drawing on the work of scholars like David Garland, the Gospel of Mark is fundamentally concerned with answering the question: "Who is Jesus?" The entire narrative, with its various characters and events, ultimately serves to reveal and explore the identity of Jesus Christ.

2. What are the primary Christological titles emphasized in Mark, and how are they presented?

Mark emphasizes several key Christological titles, most notably "Son of God," "Messiah" (or Christ), and "Son of Man." The title "Son of God" is presented as a central affirmation from the very beginning, with God's own voice at Jesus' baptism and the centurion's confession at the cross acting as bookends. While Jesus is identified as the "Messiah," this title appears somewhat problematic in the Gospel, often used by those who misunderstand Jesus' mission or are hostile to him. Jesus himself primarily uses the title "Son of Man," which Dr. Jennings argues draws from Daniel 7 and emphasizes both Jesus' future glory and his present suffering and authority.

3. What is the significance of the "messianic secret" motif in Mark's Gospel?

The "messianic secret" is a recurring motif where Jesus often silences or discourages the proclamation of his identity, particularly as the Son of God or Messiah. Dr. Jennings explains that this literary tension builds towards the centurion's confession at the cross. The secret highlights that the true understanding of Jesus' identity is inextricably linked to his suffering and death. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8) is seen as incomplete precisely because it lacks this understanding of the necessity of the cross.

4. How does Mark present Jesus' divine authority beyond explicit titles?

Beyond the formal titles, Mark presents Jesus' divine authority through what Dr. Jennings, following Garland, calls an "enacted Christology." This includes the immediate obedience to his call by the disciples, demonstrating a divine authority in his voice akin to God's call to Abraham. It also manifests in his power over the demonic realm, where his commands are instantly obeyed without struggle. Furthermore, Jesus' power to heal

various ailments, including those traditionally seen as divinely inflicted or incurable (like leprosy), and his ability to raise the dead, are presented not just as acts of healing but as demonstrations of his divine authority to undo the effects of the fall, echoing prophecies like Isaiah 35.

5. How do Jesus' miracles, like the feeding of the thousands and calming the storm, contribute to Mark's Christology?

The miracles in Mark are not simply displays of wonder but further evidence of Jesus' divine nature and authority. The feeding miracles, both for Jewish and Gentile audiences, suggest the eschatological banquet of God's kingdom, echoing Old Testament themes of God as the good shepherd (Ezekiel 34, Psalm 23). Jesus' power over the storm and his walking on water demonstrate a creative power that the Old Testament ascribes to God alone (Job 9, 38, Psalm 77, Isaiah 43), indicating that God is present in Jesus. His authoritative teaching, which goes beyond mere interpretation to reveal the divine intent behind the law, also sets him apart from the scribes and demonstrates his divine authority.

6. What is the "divine must" in Mark's Gospel, and how does it relate to Jesus' suffering and death?

The "divine must," as Dr. Jennings describes it, refers to the sense of divine necessity and preordination surrounding Jesus' suffering and death. This is evident in Jesus' passion predictions (Mark 8, 9, 10), where he states that the Son of Man *must* suffer, be rejected, and be killed. This "must" signifies that Jesus' death is not a mere historical accident but part of God's predetermined plan. Dr. Jennings points out that even at the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of his going "just as it is written about him," suggesting a fulfillment of scriptural prophecy, likely alluding to the suffering servant passages in Isaiah 53.

7. What is Mark's atonement theology, and what key verses support it?

Mark's atonement theology, according to Dr. Jennings, is intimately linked to his Christology. The suffering and death of the Stronger One are presented as having salvific significance. Key verses include Mark 10:45, where Jesus says the Son of Man came "to give his life as a ransom for many," highlighting a substitutionary and redemptive aspect to his death. Another crucial verse is Mark 14:24 at the Last Supper, where Jesus speaks of his blood as "the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," echoing the establishment of the old covenant through sacrificial blood and signifying the inauguration of a new covenant, reminiscent of Jeremiah 31:31-34, where sins are forgiven and forgotten.

8. How does the centurion's confession at the cross encapsulate the theological message of Mark?

The centurion's proclamation, "Surely this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39), is presented as a pivotal moment that encapsulates the theological message of Mark. It comes at the climax of Jesus' suffering and death, affirming his divine Sonship precisely in the context of the cross. This links back to the baptism, where Jesus was also declared the Son of God, with the "tearing" motif connecting both events. The centurion's confession signifies that the true revelation of Jesus as the Son of God is found not in earthly power or glory, but in his suffering and death, validating Mark's emphasis on a Christology of strength manifested through sacrifice. It is the moment when the messianic secret is fully revealed in the paradoxical victory of the cross.