

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

MARK THE AUTHOR

Who is Mark? The Mark in question is thought to have been John Mark mentioned as a companion of Paul (Acts 12:12,25; 15:37-39; Col 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11). 1 Peter 5:13 describes him as Peter's co-worker "my son Mark." He is thought to be the young man mentioned in Gethsemane in Mark 14:51-52.

WHAT SOURCES DID MARK USE FOR WRITING THE GOSPEL?

There is evidence from the Church of the early centuries that Mark's main source was Peter and that the Gospel was composed in Rome. Eusebius (263-339 AD) writing in *Historia Ecclesiastica (The History of the Church)* quoted from Papias, the Bishop of Hieropolis in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) from c 100-130 AD.

"Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord's sayings and doings. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of His followers, but later, as I said, one of Peter's. Peter used to adapt his teaching to the occasion, without making a systematic arrangement of the Lord's sayings, so that Mark was quite justified in writing down some things just as he remembered them. For he had one purpose only - to leave out nothing that he had heard, and to make no misstatement about it".

This does not mean that Peter was Mark's only source, not everything in the Gospel comes from Peter. But we can certainly say that Peter was the *main* source Mark used.

WHERE DID MARK WRITE THE GOSPEL?

It is believed that Mark wrote the Gospel while he was in Rome with Peter. There are some reasons for saying this:

- Since Mark composed his Gospel in Rome and it would be read by non-Jewish converts to Christianity as well as former Jews, you would expect him to explain matters that Gentile (non-Jewish, we Christians are Gentiles) readers of his Gospel would not be familiar with. See how Mark translates Aramaic words for the benefit of his readers in 5:41; 7:34; 15:34 (Matt also translates this latter).
- In Mark 14:71 the Greek could also mean that Peter cursed Jesus. In 110 AD, the Roman governor Pliny tried to find Christians were and got slave women to find out where the Christians were. If anyone was accused of being a Christian he asked them three times. If they said they were not Christians he made them curse Jesus. The Romans were not satisfied with someone saying they were not a disciple but needed them to curse Jesus. Cursing Jesus became a standard for denying the faith. So the possibility of the Greek of 14:71 meaning that Peter cursed Jesus could be significant if this practice existed also at the time Mark wrote his Gospel.
- Jewish law did not envisage the possibility of a wife divorcing her husband but Roman law did (Mark 10:12).

The Church of St Mark right in the center of Rome is believed to be built upon the house where Mark wrote the Gospel. As one who loves the Scriptures you may wish to visit it if you ever go to Rome.

WHEN DID MARK WRITE THE GOSPEL?

It is believed by most scholars that Mark's Gospel was the first written. The date of the composition of the Gospel is fixed using events in Rome and Jerusalem:

- Traditionally the date for the writing of the Gospel is said to have been after Peter's death in Rome in 64 AD and before the end of Jewish War in 67-70 AD. Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome in 64 AD during the persecutions of the Christians initiated by the Roman emperor Nero after the fire of Rome. Peter was crucified upside down in Nero's circus to the left of where St Peter's Basilica now stands. On the left of the Basilica you see an arch with Swiss guards on duty. The coble-stoned area beyond the arch on the left-hand side was Nero's circus. Paul was beheaded outside the city, although the location is now well within the city.
- The history of Jerusalem also helps us to date Mark. Matt, Mark and Luke each have an eschatological chapter, that is, a chapter dealing with eschatology, which includes, among other things, the destruction of Jerusalem. Eschatology concerns the last things, the end of time. In Mark it is chapter 13, in Matt chapter 24 and in Luke it is chapter 21. There is nothing in Mark 13 to suggest that the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, which took place in AD 70, has already occurred. This is predicted by Jesus in Mark 13:2. In Mark it is prediction, whereas Matt and Luke, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 could be more detailed. Therefore scholars conclude that the Gospel was written before 70 AD.

STRUCTURE OF THE GOSPEL

To understand a Gospel we need to understand something about its structure.

1:16-8:30	Ministry in Galilee
8:31-10:52	Journey from Galilee to Jerusalem
11:1-13:37	Ministry in Jerusalem
14-15	Passion Narrative
16	Resurrection Narrative

Putting it simply, we can divide Mark into two halves. In the first half of the Gospel (in Galilee) Jesus is mainly concerned with teaching the crowds. He uses parables and miracles and rejects any notion that he is the Messiah. For example, we see Jesus commanding demons not to reveal who he is (1:34; 3:12), and also people he healed (1:43; 7:36) and raised from the dead (5:43). This is sometimes referred to as the Messianic Secret. In the first half of the Gospel the action is largely in Galilee.

In 8:27-30 Peter confesses Jesus to be the Messiah which proves to be a watershed in the Gospel. From then on Jesus tries to teach his disciples what the true nature of the Messiah is, a suffering Messiah as we will see in 8:22-10:52 (on the way to Jerusalem to face his Passion). They had thought the Messiah would be powerful and would drive out the Romans from Palestine (Palestine was under Roman occupation since 63 BC).

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS ACCORDING TO MARK

MARK 1-8:21

Jesus called the first four disciples and immediately they left their nets and followed him (1:16-20). Would they leave everything and follow a stranger immediately? Unlikely, if they had sense. Remember the evangelists are presenting facts with their audience in mind. Mark is here trying to impress on the readers the drastic nature of following Jesus. Jesus defended the disciples against the scribes and Pharisees in 2:18,23-24. In 3:13-19 Jesus chose the Twelve and sent them on a mission recorded in 6:6b-13. It meant detachment from family and occupation, and a commitment to preach Jesus' teachings.

When Jesus taught in parables we expect the disciples to understand but they don't and Jesus becomes impatient (4:13,40). Notice in 6:34-36 that the crowd was absorbed in Jesus' teaching but not the disciples. Jesus called his disciples to serve the crowd, "Give them something to eat themselves" (6:37). This meaning of discipleship as service escaped the disciples. When Jesus came to them walking on the sea they were astonished because they did not understand about the loaves, their minds were closed (6:51-52). Although in 4:11-12 Jesus had said to the disciples that the secret of the kingdom of God was given to them, it seems that the more and more they saw they did not perceive, the more and more they heard they did not understand since in 6:51-2 and again in 7:18-19 Jesus was disappointed that the disciples did not understand. The question of the disciples in 8:4 (the crowd was with Jesus for three days and had no food) shows that they learned nothing from the first feeding miracle in 6:30-44. In the scene in the boat following this, the disciples misunderstand Jesus and he asked seven questions reacting to their spiritual blindness (8:17-21). The answer to the questions is 'No.' The disciples don't understand the meaning of the multiplication miracles nor who Jesus is.

MARK 8:22-10:52

This section of the Gospel is where we see Jesus teaching that being a disciple means service and carrying our cross. At Caesarea Philippi Peter proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah (8:27-30). In case the disciples would have the wrong idea about what type of Messiah Jesus was, and falsely think he would expel the Romans from Palestine, Jesus then began to teach them that he must suffer and die. We call these statements in the Gospels the 'Passion Predictions.'

1. The first is in 8:31-33. This is not what Peter and the disciples want, and Peter tries to dissuade Jesus, but receives harsh words from Jesus (8:33). Then Jesus teaches that anyone who follows him must take up the cross (8:34).
2. A second time Jesus taught his disciples about his future passion but they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him (9:30-32). Instead of understanding they had an argument about which of them was the greatest (9:33-34). Jesus counteracted by saying that if anyone wants to be first he must make himself last of all and servant of all (9:35). Emphasizing his point Jesus put a child in the midst of them and said that anyone who welcomes a child welcomes him (9:37). However it seems that the disciples did not learn anything because shortly afterwards (10:13) they scolded the people who brought children to Jesus for him to touch them. Jesus said that the rewards of discipleship will be accompanied with persecutions (10:30).

3. A third time Jesus predicted his passion, most explicitly of all (10:32-34). What was the disciples' response to this? James and John asked for seats on his right hand and his left hand. Then the other ten became indignant with James and John (10:41). So once more Jesus teaches them about discipleship; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant (10:43-44). We are disappointed with the disciples. In the Christian community those in positions of authority are called to be servants.

This section is bracketed or sandwiched by two stories of Jesus restoring sight; 8:22-26 and 10:46-52. Those stories are meant to be symbolic of what Jesus is doing in this section of his ministry and in this section of the Gospel of Mark, i.e. opening eyes to appreciate who he is, the suffering Messiah. In the second healing, the sight is restored totally at once, but in the first (8:22-26) the man's sight is restored in stages, the only miracle where Jesus doesn't succeed the first time! That is the way it is for the disciples, they do not appreciate Jesus fully and will need further teaching.



Matthew and Luke also contain passion predictions similar to Mark. Can you find them? Hint. Look for the first ones in Matt 16 and Luke 9.

Those who were called by Jesus to discipleship resisted the idea of Jesus as a suffering Messiah. They also resisted suffering as a necessary part of discipleship and did not take to the idea of ministering to others, or serving. The disappointment we feel with the disciples in Mark reminds us of who we are, weak sinners. We would expect the disciples to be perfect. We want them to be perfect disciples because we want to be fearless and faithful. Do we project our idealistic images of ourselves onto our ideal image of disciples? Do we want the disciples to be presented as perfect because we want to be perfect? But we are fallible followers so why should we be surprised that the disciples are also. Therefore the Gospel gives encouragement to those who have experienced failure and are beginning afresh. Mark presents Jesus more humanly than the other Gospels but also presents the disciples more humanly. Using Peter as his source Mark obviously gained insights into the humanity of the disciples.

Mark has an image for discipleship. He calls it being "on the way" e.g. in 8:27. Discipleship is not just making one momentous decision and being saved in a once in a lifetime self-dedication to God but is being "on the way." Discipleship involves decisions to be made every day while we are on the way. The call of the first four disciples in 1:16-20 was not a once for all conversion, but the beginning of a long journey on the way while faltering sometimes.

THE SUFFERING MESSIAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Suffering was a divine necessity for Jesus, a part of his calling. The Greek word *dei* is used by Mark in 8:31 when Jesus predicts his passion. That Greek word signifies that it was part of God's plan. The three passion predictions tell this with greater intensity and more detail each time. Even though Mark does not say as explicitly as Paul that this suffering is for the forgiveness of our sins, this is understood. The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many (10:45) and Jesus describes his death as the blood of the covenant poured out for many (14:24).

Mark is concerned to show how Jesus showed his followers that the path of discipleship is also the path of suffering. In the explanation of the Parable of the Sower (4:13-20), Jesus warned of a trial or persecution that would test the Christian (4:17). The death of John the

Baptist (6:14-29), although not a follower of Jesus but a witness, is another example of suffering for the Christian. After Peter's confession of faith in Jesus (8:27-30) and Jesus' explanation of his future suffering (8:31-33), Jesus explained that if anyone wanted to be a follower of his he must renounce himself and take up his cross (8:34). Those who will leave to follow Jesus will receive a hundredfold but with persecutions (10:30). James and John will drink the cup that Jesus will drink (10:39) if they are to be his followers. It is in 13:9-13 that there is the clearest teaching on the inevitability of Christian persecution, suffering and even death. The reason is that it is for Jesus' name. The two stories of storms at sea (4:35-41; 6:45-52) teach the Christian community of Mark's time and every time to trust despite persecution (Emperor Nero had the Christians in Rome persecuted after the fire in 64 AD). Mark wanted to encourage the Christians of Rome who like us did not like suffering.

THE PARABLES OF MARK 4

In the following commentary you will see some text underlined. This is the meaning of the parable as Jesus taught it. A parable may take on additional meaning for the Church at the time the evangelist wrote and can have a spiritual application for us now.

Three of the four major parables in Mark occur in Chapter 4 and two of them are also in Matt and Luke. The parables of this chapter, seed parables, were not necessarily spoken by Jesus on the same occasion but have been placed by Mark in the same chapter. They are meant to teach that the mystery of the growth of the kingdom is due to divine initiative and our human response which is either acceptance or rejection of the kingdom. The chapter begins by emphasising Jesus as teacher in 4:1-2.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MARK 4:3-9) AND ITS INTERPRETATION (MARK 4:13-20)

In Palestine sowing the seed preceded ploughing so the sower was not as careless as might seem. What did Jesus mean by this parable? Jesus was explaining the success of his preaching and ministry. Jesus was sowing the word of God. His preaching caused tensions in hearts as it called for conversion. There are many ways of not hearing and not responding to Jesus' call to convert. The first three types of seed which fail to bear fruit symbolize Jesus' ministry not bearing fruit. The fourth seed which bears fruit stands for the final success of Jesus' ministry. Note the abundant harvest of the fourth seed.

Many scholars believe that the interpretation of the parable in vv13-20 is not from Jesus but is Mark's addition. Why? The interpretation shifts the emphasis from the sower to the seeds. The trials and persecutions of v17 suggest that the Church is already in existence and undergoing persecutions (for example being falsely blamed for the fire of Rome in 64 AD). Also the mention of riches in v19 presumes a community in which the word can be lost because of riches. While the parable as Jesus taught it in 4:3-9 explained his ministry not bearing fruit, the shift in emphasis achieved by the interpretation in 4:13-20 challenges us to ask ourselves what type of soil are we. What weeds are there in us hindering the growth of the kingdom in our lives? If we listen and act on the Word of God, there will be a tremendous yield.

Applying the parable to ourselves today we can view it like this:¹

1. The seed sown on the path unfortunately doesn't even get a chance to sprout because it didn't land on soil. There was a lack of understanding and the evil one stole away the word of God. Do we ever reject part of the message of the Gospel because we do not understand it? Do we say we are Catholic but due to lack of understanding the faith also give support to artificial contraception, same-sex marriage, abortion, stem cell research, pre-marital sex or a whole host of other issues where the Church's teaching is not understood and we think we know better? There are reasons why the Church teaches what she does. Have we allowed prejudice or lack of understanding to prevent us from seeking to understand, and so reject part of the Gospel? Whenever we reject part of the message of the Gospel, to use the words of Jesus today, the evil one has stolen the word from our heart.

¹ Here I repeat thoughts in my homily at http://www.frtommylane.com/homilies/year_a/15-2.htm

2. The seed sown on rocky ground does get to sprout but when the cross comes – “tribulation or persecution” - we give up. Have we ever been moved at a parish mission or the Eucharistic Congress but did not continue to walk a new way with Jesus for some reason? Have we ever been moved in our heart by God through a good experience in Confession or at Mass or in private prayer but we quickly went back to our old way of life because we could not see beyond some temporary difficulty or disappointment?
3. The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but worldly anxiety and lure of riches hinder our hearts from being receptive to Jesus. Are there times when we are too busy to pray? Have we missed Mass because we were too busy or made up some other excuse? Are we too busy to read the Bible? Whenever we put worldly anxiety and lure of riches before God the word dies.
4. Finally the fourth type of person is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. (Matt 13:23)

Thanks be to God that we each in many ways hear the word, understand it and bear fruit. There is some of each of these four types of person in us. We could be all four of these persons at once, or predominantly one of these types of person for a certain time of life. Let us do some cardiac surgery on our spiritual hearts so that misunderstanding and prejudice, or disappointment and the cross, or worldly anxiety and the lure of riches will not render our hearts unfertile soil for the Jesus’ words, so that we do not grieve Jesus:



Can you discern your different responses to the Word? How many types of soil are there in your life and what are they? Ask the Lord for help to become richer soil.

Another application of the parable is that 100% success is not guaranteed in life. Some things will go wrong. There is only so much that we can do, leave the rest to God. Jesus did not have 100% success in his ministry or 100% success in teaching the Twelve. All the Twelve received the same teaching from Jesus and experienced the love of God through him. Yet not all produced the same type of fruit. Judas betrayed him and committed suicide and Peter denied him but recovered again. Parents raising families also have the same experience. Some children turn out differently to others. Think of the Borromeo family in Italy. Carlo (Charles Borromeo) became a bishop but his twin brother Antonio (Tony) became the head of crime in northern Italy, hiring killers etc. If all the seed that we sow does not produce good fruit we need to be gentle with ourselves.

THE SEED GROWING BY ITSELF (MARK 4:26-29)

The subject of the parable is clearly stated, the kingdom of God as v26 states. In the East the day begins at evening at sunset, so firstly one sleeps and then rises as in v27, (e.g. the Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday). The lesson of the parable is that the seed ripens without the sower’s effort. The kingdom of God grows in a hidden, mysterious way, independently of human effort. The harvest is the result of the miraculous work of God. Harvest (v29) and sickle are used in the Bible as metaphors for the end of history and judgment. Before the end of the world, time must pass according to God’s plan. Jesus’ ministry is like the beginning of the reign of God. But the coming of the kingdom is occurring mysteriously in the preaching and miracles of Jesus. When the time is ripe, God will bring about

his kingdom powerfully. We should not expect spectacular growth in the kingdom nor be disappointed by slow growth; we shouldn't expect immediate success nor be disappointed by failure and opposition. How can we apply this to growth of a parish?

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (MARK 4:30-32)

It opens with a double question. This is the form of Jewish poetry, two parallel lines, (as in the Psalms). The first verse tells us that the parable has to do with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not compared with the mustard seed itself but with the *spectacular growth of the seed*. The growth of the kingdom of God can be compared to the growth of a mustard seed which grows into a plant so large that it gives shelter to the birds of the air. The mustard plant is one of the largest herbs, growing to 6-10 feet. It is an annual, meaning that it must be newly sown every year. Note therefore that it is a plant that grows spectacularly. The point of the parable is the contrast between the small beginning of God's reign and its final greatness. This parable is based on the parable of the cedar tree in Ezek 17:22-23 which was announcing that the kingdom of David would be restored once more. The birds symbolize Gentiles seeking refuge with Jews. In the early Church the birds would naturally have been seen as Gentiles being accepted into the Church (as we see in the Acts of the Apostles). The Jews expected God's reign to be glorious (the cedar tree grows to 200-300 feet) but Jesus' ministry was small and beset with failure. But it is with such beginnings that God can bring about his kingdom which will include the Gentiles. The parable teaches us to hope and to be patient.

TITLES APPLIED TO JESUS IN MARK

Why do I spend some time here on the titles applied to Jesus in Mark? The reason is because they tell us something about Jesus. Mark was answering the question, “Who is Jesus?” through the titles he applied to Jesus. You will see the same titles used also in the other Gospels. Understanding the titles applied to Jesus in Mark, will help you understand the use of the titles in Luke and Matthew also.

CHRIST / MESSIAH

The Gospel opens in 1:1 by stating that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christ/Messiah means anointed. ‘Christ’ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word ‘Messiah.’ It means that Jesus is God’s Anointed One. Peter in Acts 10:38 says Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. This took place at his baptism in the Jordan when the dove descended on him. During the first half the Gospel Jesus conceals his messianic identity as God’s anointed. I have already referred to this above as the messianic secret. In 8:28 Peter affirms that Jesus is the Messiah but then Jesus has to teach them that he will be a suffering Messiah. During his trial before the Sanhedrin, the high priest asked Jesus, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” Jesus answered, “I am”. It is important to note that it is during his Passion that Jesus admits that he is the Christ/Messiah. It shows that his identity as Messiah can only be understood in the light of his passion and death.

SON OF GOD

Jesus is also introduced in 1:1 as the Son of God. This is confirmed in 1:11 by the voice from heaven during Jesus’ baptism. The demons address Jesus as Son of God, e.g. in 3:11 and 5:7. We see the messianic secret coming into play again in 1:34 and 3:12 when Jesus would not allow the demons to make his identity known. When the demons address Jesus as Son of God during exorcism it shows Jesus’ authority as Son of God. In 9:7 once again a voice from heaven affirms during the Transfiguration that Jesus is the Son of God. In 14:61 during the trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus was asked if he was the Christ, the *Son* of the Blessed One, and he answered affirmatively. While on the cross Jesus was mocked as Messiah/Christ and king of Israel by the Jewish religious authorities in 15:32 but a Roman centurion correctly declared, “In truth this man was the Son of God” (15:39). The readers of Mark knew from the statement in 1:1 that Jesus was the Son of God but by the end of the Gospel many of those who knew Jesus in the flesh, excluding the Jewish authorities, knew that he was the Son of God. This may have some connection with a plot structure used in some ancient dramas whereby the audience knew the truth from the beginning but the characters in the drama gradually came to learn the truth as the drama evolved. Also note that both titles, Christ and Son of God, come together while Jesus is on the cross, 15:32 and 15:39. Mark is saying that we cannot understand Jesus as Messiah/Christ or Son of God apart from his suffering on the cross. It is intrinsic to Jesus as Christ and Son of God.

KING

The title ‘king’ appears 12 times in Mark, revolving around 2 distinct scenes, King Herod in 6:14-29 and Jesus in 15:1-20 during his trial. Read both of these passages now. List the differences between King Herod and Jesus. You can use the following as a meditation on the feast of Christ the King.

A king has power.² Herod has power, prestige and luxury. But he is also plagued by weakness, superstitious fears, vanity and treachery. Ultimately Herod is not powerful, but is treacherous, weak, boastful and easily seduced. Power can dull our judgment. Jesus also has power, but a different type of power. Jesus has power over nature; multiplication of loaves and fish, calming the storm, expelling demons, power over sickness. In contrast to Herod, Jesus did not exercise power over people. His enemies plotted freely against him. We need to compare any power we have with the Word of God and allow ourselves to be converted if necessary. The kingdom of God arrives in Jesus, in his words and deeds. It challenges and threatens all earthly kingdoms.

Kings receive people of distinction at court. On his birthday Herod had a banquet with courtiers, officers and leading men of Galilee (6:21). Jesus receives the powerless, sick, suffering, and sorrowing. They offer no gift to Jesus and Jesus gives them gifts by making them whole again. Jesus ate with those shunned by society, with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus associated with the unclean, and with children who were looked down on by society at that time.

Wealth and riches measure earthly kingdoms, but these assets could become a liability in entering the kingdom of God. Earthly kingdoms are judged by their size. Jesus' kingdom has a small beginning like a mustard seed but will grow large (4:30-32). Earthly kingdoms like to demonstrate strength in numbers and power but God's kingdom is a hidden kingdom, a reality which is already with us and yet is still coming, longing for its completion, visible only to those to whom its mystery has been entrusted.

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey in Mark 11. (Kings entered cities at least on horseback and preferably on chariot. On the importance of horses see 1 Kings 5:6). Jesus is a humble king. He enters not to rule, but to suffer and die. Jesus has the appearances of kingship in Mark 15:17-19; a purple cloak (purple is a royal color), a crown, a scepter (Jesus was struck with a reed as a mock scepter in 15:19), people kneeling before him in homage. But Jesus was never lord over all; instead he was servant to all.

SON OF MAN

This is the only title that Jesus uses to describe himself in Mark. To understand what Jesus meant by using this title of himself it is essential to know what those who heard Jesus would automatically assume when they heard Jesus describe himself as the Son of Man. While some would say it meant different things it seems to me that above all it refers to Jesus as Messiah. Please read now Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14. Note the description of the Son of Man in Dan 7:13-14. It is a description of a glorious Messiah. So this title, like Christ and Messiah, is also a title to refer to the expected Messiah. So when Jesus uses this title he is admitting that he is the expected Messiah. But notice when Jesus uses this title. He uses this title in the three passion predictions. Read them once again in the teaching section, 8:22-10:52. Once again we see Jesus teaching that the expected Messiah would be a suffering Messiah, not the type of Messiah they had expected.

SON OF DAVID

'Son of David' was the chief title in use to describe the expected Messiah at the time of Jesus. This is because they knew the Messiah would be a descendant of King David. The prophet Nathan had made this promise to David in 2 Sam 7:4-17. Read that passage now. When

² I think some of this meditation comparing the kingship of Jesus with that of Herod is from a book or homily that I unable to account for now.

Jesus entered Jerusalem there was a suggestion that he was that Son of David in 11:10. 'Son of David' was used at the time of Jesus to describe an earthly messiah, a king or great ruler who would free Palestine from Roman occupation. Once again, therefore, Jesus had to teach the true meaning of the Son of David which he did in a difficult passage in 12:35-37. In this enigmatic passage Jesus is saying that the Son of David is Lord of David due to his resurrection and will sit at the right hand of the Father in heaven. (The Lord, i.e. the Father, said to my Lord, i.e. the Son of David, Jesus, to take his seat at his right hand and the enemies of the Son of David will be as a stool for under his feet through his resurrection). Do you think the scribes and the people could have understood what Jesus meant when he spoke this? No way. This would have become clear only after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. That is why it is explained only in Acts 2:34. It could not have been explained before Jesus took his seat at the right hand of his Father in heaven!