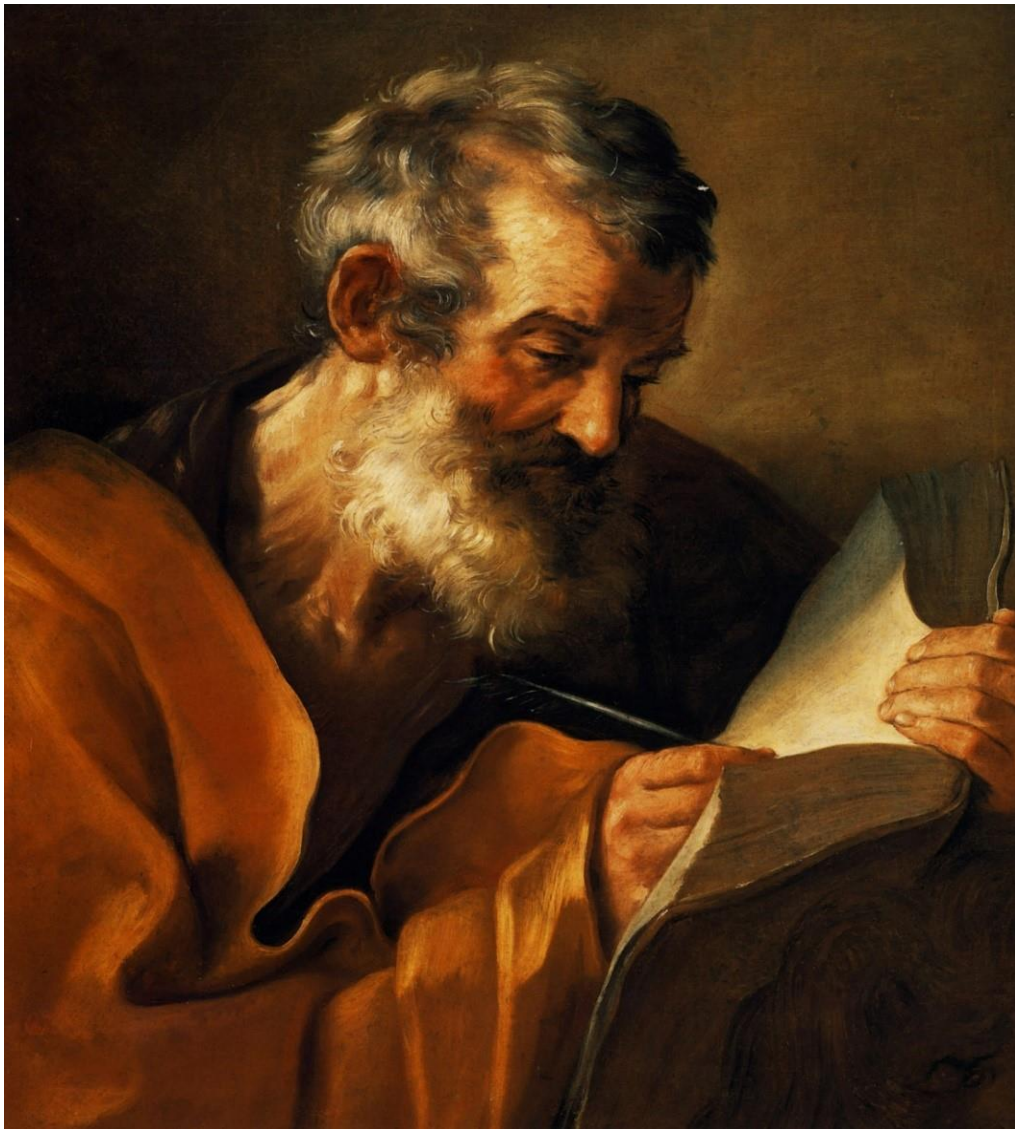


LIVING GODS WILL

The Disciple

MARK



Saint Mark by Guido Reni

The Disciple **MARK**

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Born: 5 AD, Cyrene, Greece

Died: AD 68 (aged 63), Cyrene, Greece

Death: Dragged to death from a rope through the streets

Also known as "**John Mark**" and "**Mark the Evangelist**"

He was the **cousin** of **Barnabas**

He was the son of **Aristopolus** and **Mary**

He was a **traveling companion** and **interpreter** of the **Apostle Peter**

He did **missionary work** with **Barnabas** and the **Apostle Paul**

He was the founder of the **Church of Alexandria**

The Disciple Mark authored the book of Mark of the Holy Bible

The holy, glorious and all-laudable Apostle and **Evangelist Mark** is the author of the **Gospel of Mark**, the companion of the **Apostle Paul** (as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles), and is numbered among the **Seventy Disciples**.

He is often referred to as **John Mark**, and is the founder of the **Church of Alexandria**, being regarded as its **first pope**. As a result, he is also venerated by the **Coptic Orthodox Church** as its founder as well.

His symbol as one of the four evangelists is a **lion**. The Church celebrates his feast days on April 25; September 27 with Aristarchus and Zenas; October 30 with Tertius, Justus, Artemas, and Cleopas; and January 4 among the Seventy.

His name was **John**, as the Holy Bible says: "He came to the house of **Mary**, the mother of John whose surname was **Mark**, where many were gathered together praying" (**Acts 12:12**).

He was the one whom the **Lord Christ**, to Whom is the glory, meant when He said: "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, The Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples'" (**Matthew 26:18**).

His house was the **first Christian church**, where they ate the **Passover**, hid after the death of the **Lord Christ**, and in its upper room the **Holy Spirit** came upon them.

This apostle was born in **Cyrene** (one of the five Western cities, Pentapolis, in North Africa). His father's name was **Aristopolus**, his mother's name was **Mary** and he was a kinsman of the **Apostle Barnabas**.

They were Jewish in faith, rich and of great honor. They educated him with the Greek and Hebrew cultures. He was called Mark after they immigrated to Jerusalem, where St. Peter had become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

St. Peter was married to the cousin of **Aristopolus**. Mark visited **St. Peter's** house often, and from him he learned the Christian teachings.

Once when **Aristopolus** and his son **Mark** were walking near the Jordan river, close by the desert, they encountered a raving lion and a lioness. It was evident to Aristopolus that it would be his end and the end of his son, Mark.

His compassion for his son compelled him to order him to escape to save himself. Mark answered, "Christ, in whose hands our lives are committed, will not let them prey on us." Saying this, he prayed, "O, Christ, Son of God, protect us from the evil of these two beasts and terminate their offspring from this wilderness."

Immediately, God granted this prayer, and the two beasts fell dead. His father marveled and asked his son to tell him about Christ. He believed in the Lord Christ at the hands of his son who baptized him.

After the ascension of the Lord Christ, Mark accompanied **Paul** and **Barnabas** to preach the gospel in Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, and Perga Pamphylia, where he left them and returned to **Jerusalem**. After the **apostolic council** in Jerusalem, he went with Barnabas to Cyprus.

After the departure of Barnabas, **St. Mark** went to Afrika, Berka, and the five Western cities. He preached the gospel in these parts, and on his account many believed. From there, he went to Alexandria in **61 A.D.**

When he entered the city, his shoe was torn because of the amount he had walked during his preaching and evangelism. He went to a cobbler in the city, called **Anianus**, to repair it. While Anianus was repairing the shoe, the awl pierced his finger.

Anianus shouted in Greek saying "**Eis Theos!**" which means "**O, one God!**" When St. Mark heard these words his heart rejoiced exceedingly. He found it suitable to talk to him about the one God. The apostle took some clay, spat on it, and applied it to Anianus' finger, saying "**in the Name of Jesus Christ the Son of God,**" and the wound healed immediately, as if nothing had happened to it.

Anianus was exceedingly amazed by this miracle that happened in the name of Jesus Christ, and his heart opened to the word of God. The apostle asked him about who was the only God that he cried for when he was injured. Anianus replied "I heard about him, but I do not know him."

St. Mark started explaining to him from the beginning, from the creation of heaven and earth all the way to the prophecies that foretold the coming of Christ. Anianus then invited him to go to his house and brought to him his children. The saint preached and baptized them.

When the believers in the name of Christ increased and the pagan people of the city heard of it, they were enraged and thought of slaying St. Mark. The faithful advised him to leave for a short while, for the sake of the safety of the church and its care.

St. Mark ordained **St. Anianus** as **bishop** of Alexandria as well as three priests and seven deacons. He went to the five Western cities, and remained there for two years preaching, where he ordained more bishops, priests, and deacons.

Finally, he returned to Alexandria, where he found the believers had increased in number, and built a church for them in the place known as **Bokalia** (the place of cows), east of Alexandria on the sea shore.

It came to pass when he was celebrating the feast of the Resurrection in the year **68 A.D.** that the same day coincided with the great pagan celebration for the feast of the god **Syrabis**.

Thus a multitude of pagans assembled, attacked the church at Bokalia, and forced their way in. They seized **St. Mark**, bound him with a thick rope, and dragged him through the streets crying, "**Drag the dragon to the place of cows.**" They continued dragging him with severe cruelty. His flesh was torn and scattered everywhere, and the ground of the city was covered with his blood. They cast him that night into a dark prison.

The **angel of the Lord** appeared to him and told him: "O Mark, the good servant, rejoice, for your name has been written in the book of life, and you have been counted among the congregation of the saints." The angel disappeared, then the Lord Christ appeared to him and gave him peace. His soul rejoiced and was glad.

The next morning, the pagans took **St. Mark** from the prison. They tied his neck with a thick rope and did the same as the day before, dragging him over the rocks and stones. Finally, St. Mark delivered up his pure soul into the hands of God and received the crown of martyrdom.

Nevertheless, St. Mark's death did not satisfy the rage of the pagans. They gathered much firewood and prepared an inferno to burn him. But a severe storm blew in, and heavy rains fell. The pagans became frightened and fled in fear.

The believers came and took the holy body, carried it to the church at Bokalia, wrapped it up, prayed over the saint, and placed him in a coffin. They laid the coffin in a secret place in this church.

In **828 A.D.** the body of St. Mark was **stolen** by Italian sailors and was removed from Alexandria to **Venice in Italy**. However, the head remained in Alexandria.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

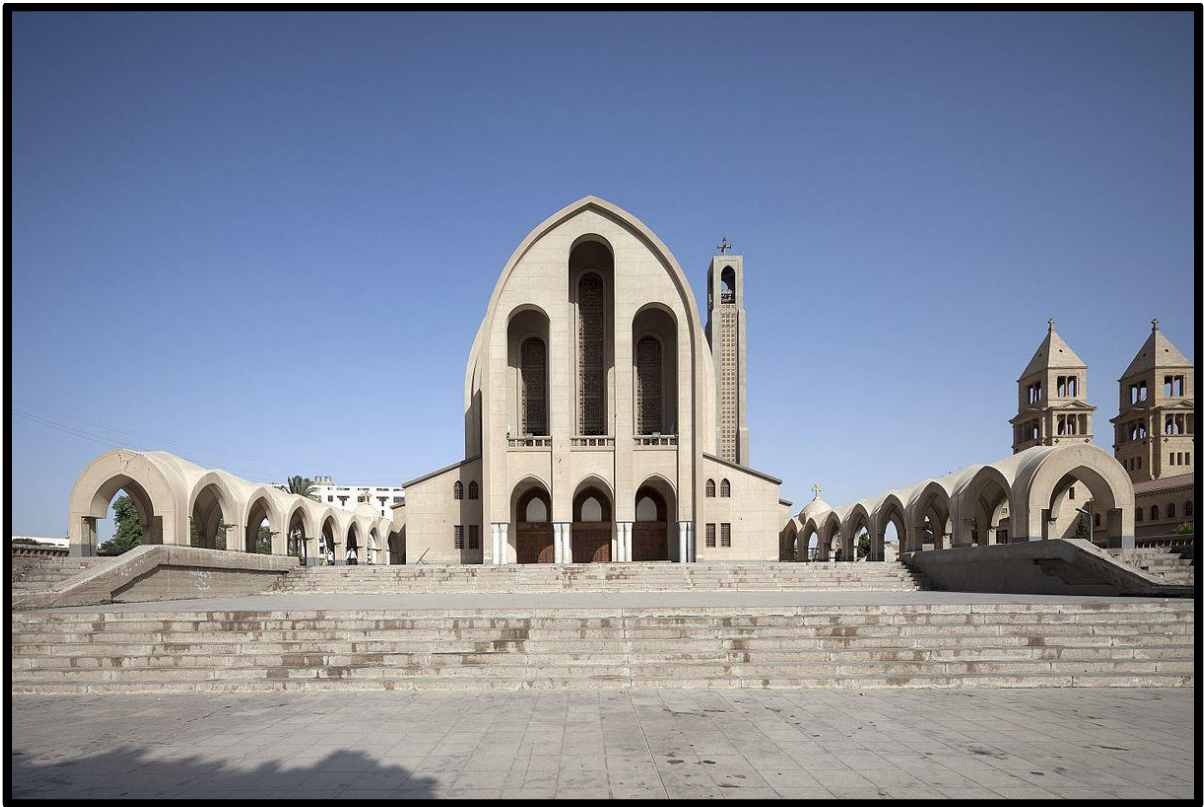
Acts 12:12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

2nd Timothy 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Acts 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

Colossians 4:10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him)

Acts 15:39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus.



Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, Cairo, Egypt



Mark the Evangelist's symbol is the winged lion