LECTIONARY FOR FOURTH WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

 Morning Evening

Sunday, St Mark’s Day (Easter III), Apr 25

1st Lesson Ecclesiasticus 51:13—end Isaiah 62:6--end

2nd Lesson Acts 25:15—end John 1:43—end

Monday. Apr. 26

1st Lesson Deut. 22: 22–22:8 Deut. 24:5--end

2nd Lesson Acts 15: 1–21 Acts15: 22--35
:

Tuesday, Apr. 27

1st Lesson Deut. 26 Deut. 28:58--end

2nd Lesson Acts 15:36–16:5 Acts 16:6--end

Wednesday. Apr.28

1st Lesson Deut. 29:10—end Deut. 30

2nd Lesson Acts 17:1–15 Acts 17:16--end

Thursday, Apr 29

1st Lesson Deut. 31:1–13 Deut. 31:14--29

2nd Lesson Acts 18: 1–23 Acts 18:24–19:7

Friday, Apr 30

1st Lesson Deut. 31:30–32:14 Deut. 32: 15--47

2nd Lesson Acts 19:8–20 Acts 19:21--end

Saturday, May 1

1st Lesson Deut. 33 Deut. 32:48—end, and 34

2nd Lesson Acts 20:1–16 Acts 20:17--end

Sunday, EasterIV, May 2

1st Lesson Deut. 4: 1–24 Deut. 4: 25--40

2nd Lesson Luke 16:19—end Luke 7: 1--35

**SAINT MARK'S DAY**

This Prayer Book Holy Day falls this year right in the middle of Eastertide, and under the Rules of Precedence it supplants the Third Sunday after Easter. That is altogether appropriate, since Mark was the human author of a Gospel. The Resurrection of Jesus is the very thing which makes the Christian message into Good News for perishing sinners, rather than just another religion for spiritual seekers.

As for Mark the man, we have a series of "maybe's." Maybe he was the man with the water jar (Mark 14:13) who guided the disciples to the Upper Room where Jesus would celebrate the Passover. Maybe he was the young man who fled away naked when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:51). Maybe he was the first to write a Gospel, a claim which many modern scholars regard as a fact. (The present writer still believes Matthew was the first Gospel.) Maybe he was the founder of the Church in Egypt, a tradition which surfaced about 300 years after the time of Christ. We do know that Mark had a falling out with Paul but later became an assistant to Peter. Mark's Gospel surely seems to be Peter's memoirs.

Of greater importance, however, is the meaning of the word "Gospel" itself.

When we trace that word though the New Testament, it surely seems that Gospel was a verb before it was a noun. In Luke, at the birth of Jesus the Angel tells the shepherds, "I bring you good tidings of great joy." The Angel was evangelizing, or "gospelling" the shepherds.

This word Gospel was prominent in the vocabulary of the evil cult of the Roman emperor. The birth, coming of age, accession to his throne, or arrival in a city of every sordid tyrant were all called "Good News." So when Jesus of Nazareth, in Mark 1:14, came "heralding the Good News from God: the time is ripe and the regime of God is about to take over," He was boldly challenging the most dreadful earthly power.

When Mark described his brief book as "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," he was preparing to tell the story of the reign of God bursting upon our sinful human environment. First Jesus conquered the demons, then He took on Caesar., and finally sin, death, and hell His only weapons were His Word and His Cross.

We began by saying that the Christian message, which Mark describes as "the Gospel of God," is not one of the world great religions, not even its highest or best or truest religion. Mark accurately portrayed the One who “came preaching” something unexpected, different, and new, the One whom Peter would confess, "Thou art the Christ." That confession, at precisely the mid-point of Mark's little book. is the essence of its message. LKW