



Theater Review

Mark's Gospel

By Kris Vire

Fellowship for the Performing Arts at Mercury Theatre.
Dir. Jeffrey Fiske. With Max McLean.

Essentials

Info & map

▶ event: Mark's Gospel

Tools

✉ E-mail

🖨 Print

⚠ Report an error

🔗 Share this

TOC Blog

Nightmare on Elms's street

7:50pm

[More posts](#)

TOC Poll

We want to know what you think. [Click here to answer this week's poll question.](#)

Student Guide

Essential advice for our scholastically minded citizens.

Thoughtful Christianity requires both embracing the idea of divine power and questioning the reporting of such. In staging the text of the Gospel of Mark in its entirety (or close to it, anyway, with the text taken from the 1973 New International Version of the Bible), director Fiske and one-man-band McLean—who last teamed here on McLean's adaptation of Christian apologist C.S. Lewis's allegorical *Screwtape Letters*—strike out on an opportunity to turn loaves into a theologically chewy feast.



INCONVENIENT TRUTH
McLean speaks the gospel.

Mark's account is, most scholars agree, the earliest-written of the four Gospels. It's also the shortest; skipping the Nativity entirely, the Book of Mark begins with Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist and focuses on his subsequent adult ministry, spending most of its verses on the final week before crucifixion.

A fine, rubber-faced storyteller, McLean finds unexpected humor in the apostles' slowness to catch on and in his portrayal of the Pharisees and Sadducees as stuffy skeptics. But opportunities for illumination seem missed. The quirks of Mark's account, like the "problem" of the Messianic secret (Jesus repeatedly asks his followers to keep his miracles on the DL), go without comment. The closest we get to annotation is in Sage Marie Carter's MapQuest-y projection design. Jesus himself remains a blank slate. When you consider the source material the infallible Word of God, we suppose, it must be hard to see where the drama needs punching up.