

The Gospel of Mark
Mark 1:1-3

Intro:

1. **Good morning everybody!**
2. **Today, we are going to Jump Into a whole new sermon series in the Gospel of Mark, which many believe was the FIRST Gospel written to record the historical facts of Jesus' life on earth.**
3. ***I'm really looking forward to focusing on JESUS on Sunday mornings!***
4. ***Let's jump in and I'll introduce you to Mark's Gospel today.***
5. **Mark 1:1-3**
6. **First, we need to talk about *the CONTEXT and BACKGROUND of WHY Mark, and the other Gospel writers, are recording their accounts of Jesus' life.***

I. The Gospel of Mark.

- A. We have some evidence that suggests that **Mark wrote his Gospel about 30 years after Jesus' resurrection from the dead.**
- B. **Why** were the Gospels written so long after Jesus' death? - - **Because** - - ***There was no need to before that!***
- C. In the years after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, ***what He did and said was preserved and passed on by oral tradition from the Apostles and eyewitnesses.***

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- D. Keep in mind that there were ***thousands of eyewitnesses*** to the teachings and miracles of Jesus in the 3^{1/2} years He ministered on earth.

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1. In fact, during the first forty days after He rose from the dead, ***the 12 Apostles, James, the Lord's brother, saw Jesus alive, along with more than 500 other people. (1 Corinthians 15:4-7)***
 2. If you wanted to know things about Jesus, ***you just went and asked someone who was there.***
- E. But then something happened ***that prompted the Apostles to preserve a written record of Jesus.***
 - F. Over the next 30 years after Jesus rose from the dead, ***the eyewitnesses started to DIE off, and false stories*** about what Jesus said and did, started to creep in and be passed around.

G. And, beginning with **Mark's Gospel**, the Apostles knew how important it was to **write down and codify the truth about Jesus** from the eyewitnesses for future generations.

1. In fact, that is the very purpose **Luke** decided to write his Gospel. **(Luke 1:1-4)**
2. **Luke** tells us that for his Gospel **he drew on eyewitness testimony**, to preserve the certain truths about Jesus for the sake of those like **Theophilus** who needed an authoritative account.
3. **The Gospels are the EYEWITNESS accounts of what Jesus did and said.**

H. We call it **The Gospel of Mark, but actually this Gospel is anonymous**. It doesn't mention who wrote it.

I. **So WHO was Mark? And, WHY do we call it his Gospel?**

1. **Mark** wasn't one of the 12 Apostles, **but he was a close companion of the Apostle Peter**, who more than likely, is the eyewitness source Mark uses to write this Gospel.

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2. Evidence for this comes from **Papias**, an early church father who wrote in 140 A.D.
3. When you read **Mark's Gospel** then, **it is more than likely the eyewitness account of the Apostle Peter.**
4. And there are **a number of things** in the Gospel itself that **suggest Peter's personal testimony**, like the healing of his mother-in-law, and his denial of Jesus.
5. Most scholars think that **Mark** is the **John-Mark** we see mentioned in the book of **Acts** and elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - a. For example when **Peter** was delivered from prison in **Acts 12** it says: **(Acts 12:12)**
 - b. And **Peter** refers to him **in his first letter. (1 Peter 5:13)**

J. **Mark is the shortest and most compact of the four Gospels.**

1. Perhaps one reason for this is that we think **he is writing for a Roman Gentile audience, not Greek or Jewish.**

- a. There are **not** a lot of **Old Testament quotations**. **The introduction: "It is written"** carries more legal force for Hebrew and Greek writing.
 - b. **Things move FAST in Mark's Gospel, he's just giving us the facts.**
 - c. **Mark** uses the word "**Immediately**" around 40 times in the Gospel.
 - d. **Mark** may move fast, **BUT**, **That doesn't** however mean **that I am going to move fast as I preach** through his Gospel!
2. Mark **doesn't waste words**, and **doesn't waste time** moving the story along.
 3. Mark gives us **the basic truths of Jesus' life, death and resurrection**.
- K. **We need the Gospels** for the same reason the early church needed them! **To set the record straight about who Jesus is and what He did.**
- L. This is important because **many people today have their own version of Jesus**.
- M. Just start asking people on the street **who they think Jesus is - - -**
1. Many think He was **a great teacher**, and **a good moral person who helped a lot of people**.
 2. Many like his emphasis on love, to the exclusion of other things He said.
 3. **Most people like Jesus. He's alright with them.**
 4. Others believe the much later stories, like the ones found in the Gnostic writings, that talk about Jesus faking his death, getting married and having children.
- N. **But Mark, and the other Gospel writers help us see that the REAL Jesus is much more than a nice person.**
- O. **A Jesus of your own making**, that you design and imagine, **cannot** Help you, Redeem you, or Change you.
- P. **So Mark sets out to CORRECT the record, and is going to give us the REAL Jesus.**

II. The Gospel of Jesus.

- A. **The Gospel of Mark is not about Mark, It's about Jesus. (Mark 1:1)**
- B. **One thing Mark is conveying is that *the Gospel is Jesus! The Gospel appears in person!***
- C. And as we hinted at before, ***if you compare Mark with the other Gospels, Mark is giving us a "distilled" version of Jesus.***
1. **Matthew begins his Gospel with a *long genealogy*.**
 2. **Luke begins his Gospel with the *childless high priest Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth*.**
 3. **John begins his Gospel going all the way back to *Creation*.**
 4. **Mark has no birth narrative, no prologue, *he jumps right in at the beginning of Jesus' ministry*.**
- D. **Mark doesn't write a lot of *WHAT Jesus taught*. He instead focuses many on *His actions*.**
- E. ***Mark is giving us the Good News - - the Gospel about Jesus.***
- F. **And in doing so, *Mark gives us the content of the Gospel we need to BELIEVE in order to be saved which he states right away: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.***
- G. Let's look at ***Mark's picture of the Real Jesus*** given to us ***through the eyes of the Apostle Peter***.

III. The Real Jesus.

- A. **First, Mark tells us that *his given birth name is JESUS*, which gives us some important information.**
1. ***Jesus was born a human being like us.***
 2. **His name "Jesus" was given by God Himself, through the angel. (Matthew 1:20-21)**
 3. And, ***His name reflects His unique purpose for being born*** The name "**Jesus**" means "God is Salvation."

B. Second, Mark tells us that ***Jesus is also “THE CHRIST.”***

1. For us, “**Jesus**” and “**Christ**” are basically synonymous and redundant.
2. But for a New Testament Greek speaker, **Jesus** is his given birth name, and “**Christos**” is His title, or position, which means: “**Messiah**”, or “**Anointed One.**”
3. And someone who held this title of anointed one, **meant that they were a KING.**
4. Being referred to as **Jesus Christ meant that Jesus is God’s anointed King, the Messiah, whom God promised to send in order to redeem us.**

C. Third, Mark goes even further and tells us that ***not only is the real Jesus a human being*** like us, and ***not only is Jesus God’s anointed King and Messiah, He is also the SON OF GOD!***

1. This is the **climax**, and most important emphasis in ***what Mark want to tell us.***
2. **The whole purpose** of Mark’s Gospel is ***to convince us that Jesus is the Son of God.***
3. It’s how Mark **begins** his Gospel. And it’s how Mark **ends** his Gospel.

(Mark 1:1) (Mark 15:39)

D. In the Bible, the phrase “**son of God**” can refer sometimes to angels or human rulers.

1. So, ***How do we know that Jesus isn’t just another great king?***
2. Mark would say: Keep reading! He tells us in the next two verses and in the rest of his Gospel. ***(Mark 1:2-3)***

E. In ***(Mark 1:3)***, **Mark** uses one of his few quotes from the Old Testament, and this one is from ***(Isaiah 40:3)***

1. First, Mark uses the quote ***to identify John the Baptist as the promised Messenger***, God sent to prepare the way for Messiah’s coming.
2. And Second, Mark uses the quote ***to show that the Messiah who is coming is the LORD Himself.***
3. The word “**LORD**” is all caps because in **Isaiah** it is a reference to **God’s personal covenantal name we see in the Old Testament– YHWH.**
4. God’s name (**YHWH**) was considered to be so holy, ***Jews to this day weren’t allowed to say it, or write it.***

5. **Mark quotes Isaiah who is saying that it is YHWH Himself who is coming as the promised Messiah.**
 6. And **Mark is saying that Jesus is YHWH in the flesh**, who comes as our Messiah.
- F. This was an incredibly audacious, earth-shattering **statement** Mark was making:
God has shown up, and He's Jesus!
- G. **Whoa!** - The divine somehow becomes a human being?
- H. **That's where many people stumble over the REAL Jesus!**
1. **We modern, intelligent, scientific, rational people *know better than that!***
 2. We're not as naïve and primitive as those 1st century people!
 3. ***That's impossible!*** That's a big leap- ***the infinite, eternal God becomes human?***
- I. Of course ***for many people, then and now, the news that God became a man is IMPOSSIBLE for them to believe*** philosophically, scientifically, mathematically, and anthropologically . . .
- J. **And yet amazingly, all the original worshipers of Jesus who were Jews, including Mark, believed Jesus was God in the flesh!**
- K. **The Jewish people had far more cultural, religious and intellectual barriers to believing that Jesus was God, than we do!**
1. The idea **That YHWH could become a human** was the opposite of everything they had been taught.
 2. ***And yet, they believed it. WHY?***
 3. ***There was Something about Jesus shattered all the barriers.***
 4. **That is what Mark is going to show us as we continue our study of Mark's Gospel!**
- L. **So, where are YOU with Jesus? Who do you say Jesus is?**
1. A Good person?
 2. A Deceiver?
 3. Crazy?
 4. A Great Teacher?
 5. An excellent Moral Example?
 6. Or, **God in the flesh?** - - - - - **Stay tuned! Mark has a lot more to say in the weeks ahead!**

Conclusion.

1. **The truth is - - - *All the religions of the world are trying to reach God.***
2. ***And every Religion has their own way and teaching about how to get to God.***
 - Follow this good teacher.
 - Do these specific things.
3. **But, *WHY* are we all trying to reach God?**
 - a. Because deep down, *we know He is there.*
 - b. Deep down *we know we need Him, and are afraid of losing Him forever.*
4. **Christianity is unique.** All the other religions teach us *ways WE can reach God.*
5. **The “Incarnation”** (God becoming flesh) *means that GOD has come to us.*
 - a. A baby was born, whose name is *Immanuel, “God with us.”*
 - b. The immortal has become mortal.
 - c. The unapproachable has become approachable.
 - d. The all-powerful has become most vulnerable.
6. ***God becoming a man in Jesus Christ is the greatest, history-altering, world-view shattering, life-transforming, **historical event that has ever happened**, that sets **Christianity apart** from every other religion in the world, every other philosophy on the face of the earth.***
7. ***The impossible has just become possible.***
8. ***What does it mean to believe that God has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ?***
 - a. It means that *God is with us, and we don’t have to be afraid anymore.*
 - b. It means that *it is possible to know God personally.*
 - c. It means that *the only appropriate response is to worship Jesus as God, and serve Him as our King, the sovereign Lord.*
9. And, **Jesus, the Son of God, told us that the only way we can know Him personally is by **BELIEVING** in Him for the gift of eternal life. (John 14:6)**
10. **Next time, Mark will show us *HOW it is possible to know we have a relationship with Him.***

Let us pray