



The Gospel of Mark

Why Four Gospels?

- Only Mark refers to itself as a “gospel”
- “Gospel” with a capital “G” refers to one of the first four books of the NT, while “gospel” with a small “g” refers to the good news that is announced
- The Gospels are accounts derived from eyewitnesses
 - “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were **eyewitnesses** and ministers of the word have delivered them to us”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Lk 1:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
 - Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them ... **This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things**, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Jn 21:20,24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- Mark is widely accepted as the first Gospel to be written

The “gospel” in the OT

- Isaiah refers to “good news” five times
 - Usually from God through a messenger who announces the reign of God
 - “who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Is 52:7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- The gospel is the good news of the coming reign of God
- Mark describes his work as “the gospel of Jesus Christ”
 - Jesus is the Christ – the expected Messiah who will usher in the reign/kingdom of God
 - It is the gospel (good news) that Jesus proclaimed, but it is more

The OT in Mark's Gospel

- “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mk 1:14–15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- However, Mark refers to Jesus as “the Son of God”, a title elevating Jesus above the role of one who brings good news
- This bearer of good news is John the Baptist, who is introduced with a composite quotation from Malachi and Isaiah

The OT in Mark's Gospel

- “Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’ ”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mk 1:2–3). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- For Mark, “my messenger” is not Jesus but John the Baptist
- And “the Lord” is now Jesus, the Son of God
- The preparation required was repentance enacted through baptism
- They were to prepare for “he who is mightier than I”

The OT in Mark's Gospel

- “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

- The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mk 1:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

- Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26–27; 37:14; Joel 2:28–29

- “And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.”

- The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Joe 2:28–29). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The Baptism of Jesus

- “Mark’s primary purpose in recording the baptism appears to have been to show divine approval of Jesus.”
 - Brooks, J. A. (1991). Mark (Vol. 23, p. 42). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mk 1:11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Rome – the Context of the Gospel

- Written during a time of tremendous political and social upheaval
- “And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mk 13:6–8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- “. At the time of his writing, which was probably in the mid to late 60s, the Roman empire was in a state of political turmoil. The golden era of Augustus (30 B.C.–A.D. 14) was over. Imperial succession had proven to be disappointing, to say the least.”
 - Evans, Craig A. Mark’s Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel
- Into this context comes “the gospel of Jesus Christ”

The Beginning of the Gospel

- Εὐαγγέλιον (gospel) is a technical term for “news of victory.”
 - Friedrich, G. (1964–). εὐαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγέλιον, προεσαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγελιστής. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 722). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
 - The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mk 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- The person who is ultimately victorious is not a Roman emperor, but a Jew who was crucified by the Romans



- **Priene Calendar Inscription, 9BC**

- “and whereas, finally, the birthday of the god [Augustus] has been for the whole world the beginning of good news (*evangelion*) concerning him [therefore let a new era begin from his birth].”

The Son of God

- Not the Emperor (divi filius)
- But JESUS – Jesus Christ
- Mark's Gospel is the start of the reign of the Son of God, the true bringer of peace, the conqueror of death and evil, Jesus the Christ, who will return to establish his rule
- Unlike the Emperor who required, or desired, the decision of the Roman senate, Jesus is announced to be Son of God by God himself

The Gospel in our Context

- Has become personal and private
 - It is personal – we are to live in a relationship with Jesus where he is our Lord and we are his slaves
 - It is not private. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a public message and not a personal opinion
- It concerns the significance of a person who lived 2000 years ago, who taught and ministered, who was executed by crucifixion, who God raised from the dead, who rules at the side of God, who will return in his glory

The Gospel in our Context

- We are called to repent – to acknowledge that we have not lived lives consistent with who Jesus really is.
- We are to confess that he is Lord, and believe that God has raised him from the dead – that our hope is to be found only in him
- We are to call on him so that we may be saved in the judgment