

Sermon Series:

Who is this man? - The Book of Mark

Sermon Title:

The Testimony of Scripture [Sermon #1]

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Text: Mark 1:1-3

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness; Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'

I. Introduction to the Book of Mark & the cultural context.

The book of Mark was written around 60-70 A.D. and was written for Christians in the city of Rome. They were undergoing great persecution at the hands of Emperor Nero. The city of Rome had burned in a great fire and, though it is believed that the Emperor set the fire himself, he needed someone to blame. So, he blamed it on the Christians. They were killed, set on fire and used as lamp posts to light Nero's gardens and killed by wild animals in the sports arenas.

Mark is writing to encourage them with the truth of who Jesus Christ is. They believe in him and he is giving a written account of his life.

II. Exposition of the text.

1. Mark starts out with the words, '**The beginning**'. Does it make you think of anywhere else in scripture that you have heard those words? **Genesis 1:1**, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* **John 1:1**, *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* This is not a mistake by Mark, who is writing as the Spirit of God directs him. What is the significance of this? God is doing the initiating. God is starting something. God's plan of redemption is unfolding. That is why Mark uses this phrase. Well, the beginning of what? What is beginning.....?

2. The beginning of **the Gospel**. What does this mean? What is a/the gospel? This was not an uncommon term in the Roman world or in Israel. Romans would have thought of the Emperor. When an Emperor, a Caesar..had a child or a great victory, they would proclaim the ‘joyful tidings’ or ‘good news’ all around. Something great has happened. Jews would have thought of something totally different. It would have reminded them **Isaiah 52:7-10**. [read it] The Jews would think of God’s promised salvation through the promised deliverer, savior, and coming King.

*For anyone who heard the term it meant- GOOD NEWS.
So, the beginning of something wonderful has arrived, something great is happening. God is doing something wonderful.

What is this wonderful thing? What IS the good news that is being proclaimed?

3. **Jesus**. In English this is the name Joshua from the Hebrew Yeshua. This is the name that was given to Jesus at his birth. It’s a common name. The angel told them to name him this. It means ‘God saves’.

Who is this man? Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? There’s something about this man that is Good News. There is something about this man that is wonderful. Who is he? What did he do?

Oh, there have been many great men in world history, but what makes this man so special?

You go [almost] anywhere in the world today and mention this name in whatever language they speak and it’ll mean something to someone. Pretty amazing that we are even here today to gather on our day off to talk about a poor Jewish carpenter named Jesus, who lived only 33 years in one of the smallest countries in the world. Pretty amazing. What’s so good about him?

4. [He’s the] **Christ**. This is a title. It isn’t his last name. Jesus is the Christ or Jesus Christ. It is a popular curse phrase [Jesus Christ], when you hit your finger with a hammer or trip or you get angry at something. What does it mean? It means ‘Anointed One’.

It means the one who has been chosen to a very high position or set apart for a great task. In Israel, when someone was to become a prophet, a priest or a king...they would be anointed with oil. Well, Jesus was all 3 of those. He was a prophet who spoke the truth and taught people and knew things other people didn't know. He was a priest because he would present an offering to God on behalf of the people. He was a King because he is a ruler in the ancestral line of King David.

Jesus is the promised Messiah or Anointed One who was to come and deliver the people. The scriptures in the Old Testament testify that Jesus is the Christ... the long awaited one.

We have the Testimony of Scripture going back thousands of years, making predictions on who this one will be. Jesus fulfilled them all.

- In Genesis 3:15, just after Adam and Eve [the first people] sinned, God has already made a prophecy about a Savior. [Read Genesis 3:15] **Fulfilled in Galatians 4:4**
- In Deuteronomy 18:15, God promised that there would come a prophet like Moses, from among the Jewish people, who they must listen to. [Read Deuteronomy 18:15] **Fulfilled in Acts 3:22**
- In Psalm 110:4, God promised there would be one who would be a priest forever. [Read Psalm 110:4] **Fulfilled in Hebrews 5:7**
- In Isaiah 61:1, God said that the Spirit of the Lord would anoint one who would preach the good news and set people free from their bondage. [Read Isaiah 61:1] **Fulfilled in Mark 1:11, Luke 4:16**

But wait a minute. This is the Roman Empire and they already have a king. They have Caesar. I thought the good news was about him. I thought he was the anointed one. So, are you telling me this Jewish guy named Jesus is greater than Caesar?

Quote: *'Caesar and Jesus Christ, the Emperor on the throne and the despised Rabbi on the cross confront one another. Both are evangel {good news} to men. They have much in common, but they belong to different worlds.'* G. Friedrich

Great news! Wonderful news! God is doing something. The promised deliverer from the Bible, the one bringing salvation is here. The promised king, prophet and priest is here. It's been talked about for thousands of years and now he's here. Who is it? Jesus Christ.

There's more to who he is!

5. The Son of God. What? Does this mean that, like the Greeks, that God had a baby with Mary? A kind of super human? Does this mean that God is like the president and Jesus is the vice-president? Or is Jesus a chief angel of something? Maybe the first created being?

It's a title. It is mentioned 37x in the Bible. It is a title about his nature, his essence...not a ranking that he holds. He is begotten of the Father, not made.

C.S. Lewis said,

'When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs, which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, and a man makes a wireless set {or smartphone}'.

So, to say that Jesus is the Son of God means he is by nature and essence GOD. He is equal to God. It is a title of deity. He is the eternal 2nd person of the Godhead. [Read John 1:1-4,14]

But we don't need to look much further than the text.

Look at Mark 1:2-3. [Read Malachi 3:1-2]- In Malachi, it is God talking. In Mark it is saying that it refers to Jesus. Hmmm.

Look at Isaiah 40:3-5 [Read Isaiah 40:3-5]- In Isaiah, it is God talking. In Mark it is saying that it refers to Jesus.

***The testimony of the scriptures is that Jesus Christ was the promised savior, deliverer, king, priest, prophet, miracle working sinless God in human flesh.**

III. APPLICATION:

So what? What does this matter to me? I just need a good job, a lovely wife and some good kids, a house, a car and a good life. That's all I want. I don't really need all of this.

Well, it isn't called Good News for nothing. We need good news because there's bad news.

None of us have lived up to God's standards. All of us have sinned, except Jesus. Being good isn't good enough. The Bible says that ***the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*** [Romans 6:23]

WHO IS THIS MAN, JESUS?

He is the lamb of God who was slain for the sins of the world. He died on the cross for you. He took your punishment. He died in your place. But God raised him from the dead. God accepted his sacrifice as payment for sin. Now he is in heaven but is coming again to judge the world. You must decide whether you believe or not. Those who believe have eternal life. Those who don't, eternal punishment and separation from God.

Who is this man? You decide.