

Great News of a Great One

Mark 1.1-13

We Hear word GOSPEL > Often think of BOOK, or DOCTRINAL Statement
 Because FOUR GOSPELS > Shaped Thinking > Church > Entire WORLD
 All BEGAN with THIS BOOK > Mark was 1st of 4 > Faithful Record of Jesus

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ...

Mark 1:1

BEGINNING > Looking back to Genesis 1 > Begin HEAVEN and EARTH
 NOW God's NEW BEGINNING in His SON > NEW Heaven and NEW Earth

MATTHEW > whose TARGET AUDIENCE was JEWS goes back to ABRAHAM

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham...

Matthew 1:1

LUKE > whose TARGET AUDIENCE was Whole WORLD goes back to ADAM

Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph ...the son of Adam, the son of God.

Luke 3:23,38

JOHN > Breathtaking Panorama GLORY of GOD sees into ETERNITY PAST

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1,14

ALL 3 Stand on Shoulders of MARK > Matt & Luke BORROW EXTENSIVELY

Word 'GOSPEL' in ROMAN World = Joyful News about the Emperor
 FESTIVALS of BIRTH & ACCESS to POWER of Emp > Reports: EVANGELS

“the birthday of the god was for the world *the beginning of the joyful tidings* which have been proclaimed on his account”

Calendar Inscription from ca. 9 B.C. about Emperor Octavian (Augustus)

ROMAN World > Audience for whom MARK Wrote > EVANGEL (Gospel) =
an historical event which introduces a new situation for the world

Christ has Come! World has its Emperor! Radically New State of Affairs in Him!

Read Mark 1.1-13

1. The Wilderness 2. The Witnesses 3. The One

1. The Wilderness

5 X's in 1st 13 vss of Mark > WILDERNESS

NIV 'Desert' > Hebrew – 'Wilderness' /// HIGH Desert /// KZ Steppe

v. 3 "a voice of one calling in the desert"

v. 4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region

v. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him
 (in the desert region)

v. 12 At once the Spirit sent him (Jesus) out into the desert

v. 13 and he (Jesus) was in the desert forty days

a. Test

ISRAEL'S Moment of GREATEST SHAME > In Desert / Wilderness

DESPITE > Seeing Plagues of Egypt – Red Sinai – Glory at Sinai – Manna

THEY STILL DID NOT BELIEVE GOD > DIED in that WILDERNESS

The LORD replied, "...as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times-- not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it... In this desert your bodies will fall..."
 Numbers 14:20-29

FELL SHORT of the GOAL to ENTER the PROMISED LAND

MORE than 800 Years LATER > GOD'S PAIN was still FRESH

They did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them. He did miracles in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt...He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand firm like a wall. He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

But they *continued to sin against him, rebelling* in the desert against the Most High. They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert? When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people?" When the LORD heard them, he was very angry; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance. Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat. He let loose the east wind from the heavens and led forth the south wind by his power. He rained meat down on them like dust, flying birds like sand on the seashore. He made them come down inside their camp, all around their tents. They ate till they had more than enough, for he had given them what they craved. But before they turned from the food they craved, even while it was still in their mouths, *God's anger rose against them*; he put to death the sturdiest among them, cutting down the young men of Israel. Psalm 78:10-31

MOMENT of NATIONAL SHAME and TRAGEDY

ISRAEL'S September 11, 2001 > POWER and PRESTIGE > Destruction & Dust

Over 1500 years LATER > WARNING Carries into NT > and on to US TODAY

So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.* Hebrews 3:7-13

Mark begins EVANGEL in WILDERNESS of SIN and SHAME
Place of NATIONAL REJECTION, Now comes GLOBAL REDEMPTION

b. Water - ISRAEL Came into WILDERNESS thru RED SEA

Water in SCRIPTURE > Symbol of JUDGMENT > LIFE or DEATH

Red Sea > DROWNED the EGYPTIANS & DELIVERED the ISRAELITES

Jonah > DELIVERED from DEATH in the DEEP

Christian Baptism > DIE to OLD LIFE > RISE to NEWNESS of LIFE in Christ

He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand firm like a wall... He split the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

Psalm 78.13,15,16

TEXT > WATER in the WILDERNESS > also SYMBOL of JUDGMENT

v. 4 John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

DEBATE over NATURE of John's Baptism > NOT Christian = Father, Son, Spirit
MORE than JEWISH ABLUTIONS or PURIFICATION SYMBOLS

UNIQUE > Not John the Essene, or John the Priest, John the BAPTIZER

John TAKES PEOPLE INTO WATER of JUDGMENT and DEATH

John TELLS PEOPLE that ONLY ESCAPE from JUDGMENT is REPENTANCE
REPENTANCE ESSENTIAL to LIFE > Repent or be Rejected > TURN or BURN

c. Spirit > Spirit of God was with People of God in the Wilderness

Spirit of God present by SIGNS and Spirit-filled SERVANTS – Prophet MOSES

In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. *Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.* So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them. Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people--where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who *set his Holy Spirit among them*, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown, who led them through the depths? Isaiah 63:9-13

2. The Witnesses

a. John the Baptist

Presence of PROPHET > Presence of WORD & SPIRIT of God > Emmanuel
400 years of SILENCE > NO Prophet, No Word, No Spirit > Where was God?

Coming of Jesus > Coming of Spirit > SILENCE is ENDED > Emmanuel COME

Angel: "...a son, and you are to give him the name John... he will be great in the sight of the Lord... *he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.*" Luke 1:13-16

He PREPARES Way for ONE who is CONCEIVED by the HOLY SPIRIT

v. 8 he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit

v. 10 the Spirit descending on him like a dove

v. 12 the Spirit sent him out into the desert

1) Personality > John was Man of Desert for a Mission in the Desert

Our SHALLOW ERA Personality is MOST IMPORTANT:

Hockey Mom, Community Organizer, Kazakhstan IDOL

v. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Everything about John told people he was a prophet. He was in the mould of Elijah. His clothing was 'desert wear'; his diet was desert food. He stood out from his contemporaries as clearly and recognizably as his great predecessor. Sinclair Ferguson

All of these point to a simple lifestyle, which true prophets of God today should emulate. Victor Babajide Cole

2) Privilege

GREATEST OT Prophet: Jesus: "I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist..." Matthew 11:11a

GREATEST in PRIVILEGE > SAW One all Righteous Prophets LONGED to See

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing 1 Peter 1:10-11

John the PROPHET's Search Fulfilled > SAW Him, HEARD Him, BAPTIZED

3) Prophet

GREATER PRIVILEGE > ALL who BELIEVE on one BAPTIZED by JOHN

...yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Matthew 11:11b

John DIED before Fully Knew: "the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing" 1 Peter 1:11

John the PROPHET Saw AXE would be LAID Tree > Never Knew Tree was Cross AXE would FALL FIRST Upon JESUS, Endured WRATH for SINS of His People

John SHOCKED to Know: DEATH of JESUS for a BROOD of VIPERS like US!

Years LATER > Apostle Paul met Disciples of John in distant EPHESUS
They has DEFICIENT EXPERIENCE because of INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." Acts 19:4

Jesus is Turning Pt of Human History: God has Come > Repentance only Response

b. Mark

RESIDENT of JERUSALEM: Mother, Mary, Owned LARGE HOUSE: Mtg Place
EYEWITNESS of the Events of Jesus MINISTRY > Followed from DISTANCE

A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind. Mark 14:51-52

Mark MAY have been FOUNDER of JERUSALEM STREAKERS SOCIETY

CERTAIN > Cousin Barnabas > Followed and Abandoned Paul > Loved by Peter

STORMY Relationship with PAUL > Reason for Emphasis on Disciples' Struggle?
HAPPY ENDING: Before death Paul wrote – 2 Timothy 4:11
Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

She who is in Babylon (Rome), chosen together with you, sends you her greetings,
and so does *my son Mark*. 1 Peter 5:13

Mark was not setting out to write a chronological account of the words and deeds of Jesus in the correct sequence, nor to give a complete account of his life...he used the teaching and preaching materials used by Peter in Rome, in accordance with the needs of Peter's audience. Victor Babajide Cole

41 X's Mark uses Gk word for 'Immediately' or 'Right Away' > Sounds like Peter!

c. Church

Mark's Message > DUAL AUTHORSHIP > PRIMARY Author: Holy Spirit

Jesus: "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." John 14:26

Peter: “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of men, but *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*” 2 Peter 1:21

Believe by FAITH > MARK selected by RISEN JESUS to pen His MEMOIRS
God the Spirit carried Mark > Book Fully words of Mark and Fully Word of GOD

Mark’s 1st AUDIENCE for GOSPEL was CHURCH IN ROME > Roman World

NERO became CAESAR in 54 A.D. > Ruled Peacefully & Responsibly for 5 Years

About 59 A.D. > Began REIGN of TERROR - IMPOSED Heavy TAXES
SILENCED the SENATE – Encouraged SUICIDES at PUBLIC BANQUETS

64 A.D. Rome BURNED 2 X’s in 2 Weeks > Only 4 of 14 Districts of City Spared
NERO himself BLAMED > He SHIFT Blame to CHRISTIANS – Punished Them

Nero fabricated scapegoats – and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called)...First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned – not so much for their incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies. Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animal skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight. Nero provided his Gardens for the spectacle, and exhibited displays in the Circus, at which he mingled in the crowd – or stood in a chariot, dressed as a charioteer. Despite their guilt as Christians, and the ruthless punishment it deserved, the victims were pitied. For it was felt that they were being sacrificed to one man’s brutality rather than to the nation interest.

Roman secular historian - Tacitus, Annals XV

To THESE Faithful Mark Dedicates THIS GOOD NEWS of our Faithful Savior
KNOWING the HISTORICAL Context adds NEW MEANING to Gospel:

v. 13 He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

He was the Son of God, yet he entered into the arena of flesh and blood, shared his life with sinful men and women, and experienced to the full the fiercest of onslaughts from the Tempter. Sinclair Ferguson

LOGICALLY Time to LAY-LOW – BE QUIET – NOT BE SEEN or HEARD

Jesus: "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit." Mark 13:9-11

Gospel VISUAL and VERBAL > PRACTICED and PREACHED > Seen & Heard
What seems like time to SHUT UP! May actually be time to SHOUT OUT!

Gospel of Mark > of Jesus > Knows NO SILENT WITNESS > GOOD NEWS!
Of course – LIFE must SHOW the GOSPEL – But we MUST SAY the Gospel

A careful reading of the Gospel will serve to introduce the author as a theologian of the first rank who never forgot that his primary intention was the strengthening of the people of God in a time of fiery ordeal. William Lane

3. The One

v. 1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

NOT Good Advice on HOW to LIVE > GOOD NEWS One who Lived, Died, Rose

JESUS – Greek form of Hebrew word JOSHUA = GOD is SALVATION

Mark > Focus on JESUS as SERVANT of Church / SOVEREIGN over Cosmos

No Genealogy (Matthew) or Birth-Narrative (Luke) > Came as a SERVANT

a. Prophesied

vs. 2-4 It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"- "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

Message comes from THREE OT Texts > Mark well Aware of OT
Perhaps QUOTING from Already Existing Summary of OT Texts > Jesus

See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Exodus 23:20

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God." Isaiah 40:3

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. Malachi 3:1

ANCIENT TIMES > Before visit of KING > MESSENGER Prepared the Way
1) REPAIR the Roads and 2) PREPARE the People

b. Perfect

GOD comes to CRIME SCENE > WILDERNESS where SALVATION was LOST

SECOND ADAM > Enters World NOT as Adam FOUND it – as he LEFT IT
PERFECT OBEDIENCE Not in Delightful Garden but DANGEROUS Wilderness

SECOND ADAM was the SINLESS ADAM > TRUE and FAITHFUL ISRAEL

LORD who was ANNOUNCED and BAPTIZED in Wilderness > Stays 40 Days
Israel FAILED 40 Years in Wilderness > Jesus FAITHFUL 40 Days of FIGHTING

v. 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

FIGHT Continued THREE YEARS > All the way to Battle ROYALE on CROSS

Jesus obedience to God is affirmed and sustained in the wilderness, the precise place where Israel's rebellion had brought death and alienation, in order that the new Israel of God may be constituted. William Lane

c. Punished

v. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

v. 9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

INTENTIONAL Parallel between vss. 5 & 9 > The MANY and the ONE
MANY SINNERS with MANY SINS > ONE SINLESS SAVIOR on MISSION

Here already he indicates how he will become our Saviour: by standing in the river in whose waters penitent Jews had symbolically washed away their sins, and allowing that water, polluted by those sins, to be poured over his perfect being. Sinclair Ferguson

Jesus: "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!" Luke 12:49-50

Jesus ENDURED BAPTISM of WRATH > Fire of PUNISHMENT > on CROSS

d. Pours Out

700 years EARLIER – ISAIAH cried out in DESPERATION for REDEMPTION...

Oh, that you would burst forth from the heavens and come down! Isaiah 64:1

v. 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

God had come down, and there was striking attestation that sonship has been re-established through the one true Israelite whose repentance was perfect. William Lane

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

vs. 7,8 And this was his (John's) message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

John PROPHECYING Baptism of Spirit > NOT an EXPERIENCE but EVENT
Once for All Event of REDEMPTION > Cross, Resurrection, Pentecost, Ascension

All who LOOK to Him in FAITH Receive the WONDERFUL BENEFITS of Jesus

Mark's Mentor Peter was God's Preacher on that Pentecost Day:

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. Acts 2:32-34

We live on THIS SIDE of EVENT of Baptism of Spirit > Invited to RECEIVE BOTH FORGIVENESS of Sin AND FULLNESS of Spirit by FAITH in JESUS

Peter: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38-39

URGENT Question of Mark: Who is Jesus?

Question MAY have asked while RUNNING NAKED thru JERUSALEM?

MAY have asked while MENTORS PAUL and PETER DIED for HIM?

MAY have asked when NERO unleashed his CRAZED FURY against Church

QUESTION YOU MUST ask > Question of the AGES > The Great Man
Mark BEGINS with CONCLUSION

For MARK > Jesus is SAVIOR, MESSIAH, and GOD in Human Flesh

v. 1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

BOLD, IN-YOUR-FACE > No Fear of Monotheistic Jews or Idolatrous Romans
Without **SHAME** and Without **THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION** > Jesus is God

CONCLUSION Reached by **EVER-WIDENING AUDIENCE** -

Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."
Mark 3:11

DEMONS Understand **WHO** is **JUDGE** they will **MEET** on **LAST DAY**

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?...Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."
Mark 8:27,29

EVEN BONE-HEAD Peter finally 'GETS IT!'

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"
Mark 15:39

Even a **SERVANT** of **CAESAR** Sees this **SUFFERER** is **SOVEREIGN**

Today > Hundreds across City > Thousands across Nation > Millions around World
Gospel of Mark **TRANSLATED** into 1500 Languages Already --- **MORE SOON!**

ECHO Mark's **AFFIRMATION** > Jesus Christ, the Son of God

Gospel of Mark > Call to Suffer with the Servant / Stand with the Sovereign

Carry this **GREAT NEWS** that **GREAT ONE** has **COME!**

Mark 1

1:1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"- 3 "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" 4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." 9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.