



# THE GOSPEL OF MARK

## Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God



Part 1

*"The Gospels & the Canon of Scripture"*

1-31-21

### Introduction: Redemptive History

- The authority of the Bible to tell us who we really are and how we ought to live in the world is based on the fact that the God of the Bible has acted in history. While God glorifies Himself in all of history, He does so particularly in *redemptive history*.  

“Redemptive history comprises those events by which God redeems His people from sin. Redemptive history is preeminently the work of Christ in His incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension.” — John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*
- We should recognize, therefore, that the gospels are central to our understanding of redemptive history and therefore the biblical narrative itself because they describe its climax in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**Key Point:** The gospels hold a central place in Scripture because they introduce us \_\_\_\_\_ to the God of redemptive history and convey to us His actions by which He has secured our salvation.

### The Gospel & the Gospels

#### **‘Gospel’ Defined**

“gospel” — εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*) — “Good news” or “glad tidings.”

- ⇒ The term has its origins in the OT, specifically in the writings of the prophet \_\_\_\_\_ where it is associated with good news concerning the Lord’s saving power and presence among His people who will behold Him (40:9), know that He reigns (52:7), and experience the deliverance that He will provide through Messiah (61:1).
- ⇒ The primary usage of the term in the NT is in reference to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 15:1-4—<sup>1</sup> Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

“The heart of the gospel is what God has done in Jesus, supremely in His death and resurrection.” —D.A. Carson

#### **‘Gospels’ Defined**

- ⇒ The term ‘gospel’ is also used to refer to each of the four books in the NT that describe the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

Mark 1:1—*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

“The gospel in the NT is also a literary classification, and the titles of the...gospels demonstrate a conscious awareness of this reality within the early church. According to Martin Hengel, “The unusual titles of the Gospels already indicate that the evangelists...bear witness in their works to the one saving message of Jesus Christ.” We have *four* gospels and *one* gospel of Jesus! Roughly half of the NT falls into the category of narrative. Evidently, early Christianity had quite a penchant for using narratives to unpack the significance of the gospel.” —G.K. Beale & Benjamin Gladd, *The Story Retold*

- ⇒ The gospels bear a remarkable similarity to an ancient literary genre of Greco-Roman \_\_\_\_\_ (“Lives”).

“The point of this type of literature is to inform the readers of a leader and invite the readers to believe that message. The Gospels, like Greco-Roman biography, primarily narrate the story of a protagonist. In short, each chapter and literary unit in the Gospels somehow informs us of Jesus and his message.” —G.K. Beale & Benjamin Gladd, *The Story Retold*

**Key Point:** The gospels tell us the full \_\_\_\_\_ of the life of Jesus Christ which allows us to make sense of the propositional truths of the gospel concerning His person and work.

### Questioning the Gospels

#### 1. Why are there four gospels and who ‘chose’ them?

**The Problem of Other Gospels:** It is often claimed that the four gospels in our Bible were arbitrarily chosen at the expense of other ‘gospels’ by Christian leaders who were interested in establishing their own authority sometime in the 4th century.

- ⇒ Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (the canonical gospels) are the only gospels that can be dated to the lifetimes of the \_\_\_\_\_ (the 1st century AD).

*Matthew* (Late 50’s-Early 60’s—Irenaeus)

*Mark* (Early to mid-50’s—Clement)

*Luke* (Early 60’s—Internal Evidence)

*John* (70’s-80’s—Clement)

⇒ That there were four gospels \_\_\_\_\_ as authoritative was well established by the 2nd century AD.

“It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer than the number they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live and four principle winds... [and] the cherubim, too, were four-faced.” —Irenaeus of Lyon (2nd C.)

⇒ The four canonical were not chosen, they \_\_\_\_\_ themselves upon the church because they alone were inspired by God.

\* The Spirit enables the church to know which books are canonical.

John 10:27—*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

\* The church was never without Scripture (the OT) by which to test the writings that would become the NT.

Rom. 1:1-4—*1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,*

## 2. Can we trust the gospels?

**The Problems of Bias:** It is often argued that the gospels cannot be trusted because the authors have a theological agenda.

⇒ Ancient history was not written from a position of neutrality, but it placed an emphasis on the importance of eyewitness \_\_\_\_\_.

\* Each of the canonical gospels has a connection to the apostles: two were written by apostles (Matthew & John), one is the account of an apostle, although not written by him (Mark), and one was written by a companion of the apostles (Luke).

Luke 1:1-2—*1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,*

⇒ The truthfulness of the gospels in terms of their theological claims is underscored by their \_\_\_\_\_ in more mundane things such as geography.

“The writers [of the canonical gospels] either were acquainted with the land themselves or accurately recorded what was reported by others who were...The information the writers had is consistent with what we would expect if the Gospels were by their traditional authors. The resulting Gospels are not what we would expect from people who made up stories at a geographical distance.”  
—Peter Williams, *Can We Trust the Gospels*

**Key Point:** Believers can have confidence in the canonical gospels because in them God has handed down to us through His apostles \_\_\_\_\_ accounts of the life of our Savior and Lord.

## Beholding Our God in the Gospels

Heb. 1:1-3—*1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

### Observations

1. These verses describe the coming of Jesus as the climax of redemptive history.
2. These verses emphasize that Jesus reveals God by His authoritative \_\_\_\_\_ and in His \_\_\_\_\_.
3. These verses emphasize that Jesus has acted to secure \_\_\_\_\_ for His people through His work.

**Key Point:** It is in the gospels that we are invited to \_\_\_\_\_ for ourselves that these things are true of the Lord Jesus!

## Concluding Thought

- Jesus loves me this I know for the \_\_\_\_\_ tells me so.

2 Pet. 1:16-21—*16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

“The Father does not lie to the Son. The Son does not lie to the Spirit. The Spirit does not lie to the apostles. This knowledge underscores the authority of the apostles’ writing.” —Sinclair Ferguson