



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God



Part 3

"The Beginning of the Gospel"

2-14-21

Introduction

- The authors of the books of the NT often use the first portions of their writings (prologues, greetings, etc.) to introduce the overall concepts or themes that they intend to address throughout the book as a whole. While this is particularly the case with the NT epistles, it is also observable within the gospels.

Key Point: The beginning of Mark's gospel functions as a _____ through which we should view all that Jesus says and does and as a _____ that He alone can truly meet the deepest needs of His people.

The Title of Mark's Gospel

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

- This title serves as an _____ both to Mark's prologue (1:1-13) and to the book as a whole.

"beginning"—ἀρχή (*archē*)—The commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being.

- ⇒ The term is used here in a temporal sense to show that the origin of the "good news" is traceable historically to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The term "beginning" is also used in other key passages of Scripture related to the person and work of Jesus (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1).

"the gospel"—εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*)—"good news"

- ⇒ The OT background comes from Isaiah where it is associated with The Lord's presence among His people (40:9), His rule and reign (52:7), and His salvation of the oppressed and afflicted (61:1).
- ⇒ Mark's use of the term should not be seen to be in conflict with Paul's (focused primarily on the death and resurrection of Jesus—1 Cor. 15:1-8—and its implications), rather it would certainly have been informed by it (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

"Mark applies the keyword "gospel" that was used in missionary preaching to his narrative of...Jesus, from his baptism by John through his ministry in Galilee up to his passion, his death on the cross and his resurrection in Jerusalem."

—David Gardland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*

- ⇒ Mark's usage of the term would also recall the Greco-Roman context in which it was often used in reference to the Roman emperor. In that sense, the "good news" about Jesus would serve as a challenge to the authority of Caesar.

- The title explains Jesus' true _____ from the outset and highlights Him as the subject or focus of the book.

"Christ"—Χριστός (*christos*)—"anointed" (the Messiah)

- ⇒ The term is used in the OT to refer to the Davidic King (Psa. 2:2). In the intertestamental period it came to refer to the coming king who would purge the land and bring about the fulfillment of the OT promises to Israel. Mark's gospel will show that there is more to the role than the common Jewish expectation because Messiah is also Isaiah's suffering Servant.

"the Son of God"

- ⇒ This can be understood as a royal title and a synonym for "Messiah" since the OT often refers to the Davidic king as "son" (2 Sam. 7:14; Psa. 2:7) and in that sense it would also challenge the authority of the Roman emperor. Given how the gospel of Mark portrays Jesus as Yahweh, it seems that he has it in mind as a term that identifies Jesus' own deity.

Key Point: From the beginning of Mark's gospel, Jesus will be _____ as the Messiah who comes in fulfillment of God's promises in the OT, but He will also be progressively _____ as the Son of God.

"The two titles, Messiah and the Son of God, shape the entire narrative of the Second Gospel. Mark expects his audience to reflect upon these two titles and grasp the totality of Jesus' ministry in light of them." —Ben Gladd, *Handbook on the Gospels*

The "Good News" in the Old Testament

Mark 1:2-3—²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY, ³THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS: 'PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT,'"

- Following the title, Mark quotes directly from _____ Old Testament books.

- ⇒ His reference only to Isaiah should be understood in terms of his tendency to use the literary technique of 'sandwiching' (intercalation).

Mark 1:2-3

A Reference to Isaiah (1:2a)

B Quotation of Exod. 23:20 & Mal. 3:1 (1:2b)

A Quotation of Isa. 40:3 (1:3)

Quotation #1

Exodus 23:20-21—²⁰ ***Behold, I send an angel before you*** to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.

²¹ *Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.*

⇒ This promise comes amidst God's instructions given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. They are warned against lying and doing evil (23:1-2), perverting justice (23:6-8), oppressing sojourners among them (23:9), avoiding idolatry (23:13), and offering proper sacrifices to the Lord (23:18). **If Israel will keep the commands of the Lord, He will go before them and defeat their enemies so that He might dwell together with them in the land.**

Quotation #2

Mal. 3:1-2—¹ ***Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way*** before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² *But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.*

⇒ The words of the prophet Malachi are spoken to the people roughly 100 years after their return from exile. Although the temple had been rebuilt, the people were not worshipping the Lord properly and indeed were characterized by many of the sins warned against in Exodus 23 (Mal. 3:5). **The messenger promised in Malachi comes to prepare Israel for the Lord's arrival by highlighting their sin so that they recognize their need for Him.**

Quotation #3

Isa. 40:1-3,5—¹ *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.* ² *Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.* ³ ***A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*** ...⁵ *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

⇒ Isaiah 40 is the turning point in the book, anticipating the return of the people from exile. Although they have sinned against the Lord, they will receive forgiveness and the Lord Himself will come and dwell among them. **The messenger promised in Isaiah goes before the Lord and proclaims "good news" to Israel that their sins can be forgiven and that they will behold their God (40:8).**

Key Point: Mark's OT quotations serve to highlight Israel's _____ as well as God's promise to bring them the "good news" of the redemption that He will accomplish for them.

2. Mark intends for his audience to understand the "good news" about Messiah in light of the prophecies of _____.

Mark 1:1-2a(NLT)—¹ *This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began* ² *just as the prophet Isaiah had written...*

- (1) Isaiah describes Messiah as the Davidic King who exercise rule and authority and who bear divine names (Isa. 9:6-7). He will be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11:1-2) and will defeat Israel's enemies and rule over His people (Isa. 11:4-5).
- (2) Isaiah also describes Messiah as the Servant of Yahweh who will to bring salvation both to Israel and the nations (Isa. 49:5-6).
- (3) Isaiah describes Messiah as the Servant who will suffer in the place of others and who will bear their sin (Isa. 53:4-6) but who will somehow not be overcome by death (Isa. 53:10-11).

Key Point: From the beginning of His gospel, Mark is showing us that _____ (specifically the OT) is the proper means by which we are to interpret Jesus' person and work.

Concluding Thoughts

- As Messiah, Jesus took on true _____ in order that He might become an acceptable sacrifice in the place of sinners!

Heb. 2:7—*Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

- As the Son of God, Jesus work on our behalf was _____ and _____ in His triumph over sin and death!

Acts 2:23-24—²³ *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.* ²⁴ *God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*