

“The Beginning of the Gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - pastorpat@waukeshabible.org
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Read Mark 1:1

Mark's Gospel account is a continuation of a story-line that began before the foundations of the world were poured. It is the fulfillment of promises made by God to Himself that would benefit all people in general and His people in particular. It is the story of Jesus Christ. Mark directly identifies the person and work of Jesus Christ as *gospel*. The word “gospel” gets lost to us modern readers. The word itself is from the Old English *god-spell* “good tidings or good news” as a translation of the Greek word *euaggelion* as used in the New Testament. It is not a word that is found in the Old Testament, but was clearly present in idea. What Mark and the entire New Testament endeavors to do is help us see that Jesus Christ *is* the gospel. He is the good news.

Although there is consent as to the statement, “Jesus Christ *is* the gospel,” there is always a present danger of putting our hope and confidence in something other than Jesus Christ. Perhaps it is education, or better employment, or a different spouse, or better behaved children. Even in the manner of how we present the “gospel” can become errant. We have made the gospel an A-B-C proposition, as if the gospel were a 3-step program. What we have learned in the past and what we will hear again in this text is simple: “Jesus Christ *is* the gospel.” But why is Jesus Christ good news?

Mark's Gospel tells us that God's promises have been fulfilled, but there is still more to come. It is the truth of the good news about Jesus Christ that fuels us to endure the chronic conditions of a fallen world and live in rest knowing that the best is yet to come. I would like us to consider the person and work of Jesus Christ as to why who He is and what He has done constitutes “good news.”

First, Jesus Christ is the eternally existing, inexhaustible, and unchanging God in human form. Jesus Christ is all that God is, and yet in human form in order to become for us what we could never become for ourselves. His love, acceptance, and forgiveness is without limit. There is nothing He does in thought or deed that exhausts His nature. He is the only one who is all-present, all-knowing, and all-powerful. All of His thoughts and deeds are always full expressions of what it means to be *God*.

It is impossible for finite man to comprehend fully the infinite God. What we know of Him pales against what is knowable about Him. Much of what we know about God must be embraced by faith. His mere existence is *good news*. His presence is heaven and His absence is hell. Yet the nature of God moves Him to act. He chose to create matter in order to form an environment, an arena in which His glory might be manifested and enjoyed by those whom He creates. He ordered a fall in order that He might redeem those who fell. How the ordering and the execution of the order are carried out to fulfillment is a truth whose full understanding escapes finite man. A redemption secured before the foundation of the world presupposes a fall from which the fallen might be redeemed. This brings us to the good news of His redemptive work. The gospel is not a good job, paid bills, clothes on your back, a roof over

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your head, a spouse, behaving children, healthy living, or any myriads of lesser things. The gospel *is* Jesus Christ in His person and in His work. But the work of Jesus Christ is the consequences of His person. They can never exist apart from Him or be appreciated independent of Him. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is the shadow cast by His presence. However, because of who He is, what He has done has infinite worth and His people are the beneficiaries of this emanation of His glory.

For just a moment, let us consider five of the *shadows* of His glory. We will only note those emanations as they exist inside of His redemptive work.

First, is the word *salvation*. Salvation speaks of rescue, of deliverance. Salvation presupposes you and I needed rescue, we needed deliverance. All of us are in perpetual danger. This danger is imminent; it is already upon us. His work saves us from this danger. This is good news.

Second, is the word *redemption*. Redemption speaks of debt paying, of canceling the obligation that consumes. Redemption presupposes an insurmountable debt that all have and none are capable of reducing. We are all drowning in a sea of sin debt that God must redeem us from. His work redeems us from this debt. This is good news.

Third, is the word *reconciliation*. Reconciliation speaks of alienation, of distance, of warring factions. Because of finitude and sin, mankind sits in a position of alienation from God. We are at war with Him. In fact, as repugnant as it sounds, we hate Him. His work breaks down the barrier between God and man and His people are now reconciled to Him. They have full fellowship and complete access to Him without reservation or restriction. This is good news.

Fourth, is the word *regeneration*. Regeneration speaks of new life, new birth, resurrection. Regeneration presupposes death. Regeneration exists in the absence of life. Everyone, everywhere, at all times is born spiritually dead. Although we look with our eyes and see people with the appearance of life, they are actually “dead men walking.” His work is not simply resuscitating the fainted, but resurrecting the dead. He brings the dead to life. It is only after regeneration that anyone begins to truly live. This is good news.

Finally, is the word *imputation*. Imputation speaks of transfer, of grace. Imputation presupposes need, deficiency, inadequacy, inability, an incurable helplessness. In this great *shadow* of His person, our Lord Jesus Christ transfers to our account His own life, His nature, His righteousness, His obedience. He exchanges it for our failure, our death, our inability, our rebellion. This work is so incomprehensible and utterly magnificent that God now sees us in union with His Son. He sees us as His own. This is good news.

Friend, Jesus Christ is the good news. All that we have and enjoy is only and forever found in Him. He is the true *substance* that casts a great *shadow*. If the shadow cast is beyond our ability to process, then we can only imagine that the substance is beyond doubt glorious. May the Holy Spirit move us to full comprehension and appreciation of the gospel.