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Title: "The beginning of the Gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" – Part 2  
Text: Mark 1:1  
Theme: The gospels have a distinct goal in the redemptive purpose of God.

### **Its Eternal Necessity:**

In the absence of the Gospel story we would be lacking a significant piece to the larger picture that God established. We no longer live in expectancy, waiting for God to crush the head of the serpent. We can live with full assurance that God has kept His word to deliver all who trust in Him.

There is nothing as important as what the gospels tell us about Jesus Christ.

### **How will they best hear?**

Use the imagery of a life jacket for a drowning man. The life jacket saves you from drowning. The only people who truly find a life jacket of immeasurable value are those who have been saved by one. That life jacket, to them, is gospel.

Before we begin let us consider four simple questions.

### **Questions:**

1. Why were the Gospels written in relation to the larger body of biblical literature?
2. What is their BIG IDEA? What do they emphasize?
3. What is Mark's specific intent in relationship to Jesus Christ and his immediate audience?
4. What place does Mark have in my daily life?

### **Introduction:**

When we read the gospel stories it is important to understand the reason as to why they were written and what their goal is in the redemptive purpose of God.

**To Know:** The intent of the Gospel's overall and Mark's in particular.

**To Choose:** To see the beauty of Jesus Christ and to choose Him above all else.

**To Feel:** To find our joy and rest in who He is and what He has done in our behalf.

- I. The Reason for the Gospels.
  - A. Purpose-not biographical.

The Gospels are not biographies in the strict sense. A biographer writes to reveal as much of his subject as he can. The Gospel writers, on the other, **wrote not to reveal all about Christ, but to prove a point about Him** (John 21:25). Events preceding Christ's

birth, the birth itself, and those immediately following, appear in Matthew; His youth appears at the end of Luke 2. The Gospels give no record of the specific events of the Lord's life from that point until He began His public ministry when He was about thirty years old (Luke 3:23). His life during this period is described only generally by Luke, who states, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (2:52). **The Gospels are arguments more than biographies.**

### B. Theme – Christ's Earthly Ministry.

Each of the Gospels become more detailed as the end of Christ's life draws near. Matthew 1-18 (64% of the book) presents all but the last six months of Christ's life. **Thus over one-third of the book focuses on those last six months.** Mark follows a similar pattern. Chapters 11-16 (37%) present the last six months. Luke's attention to this period is even more intense (chapters 11-24, or 58%). John devotes chapters 10-21 (57%) to the subject.

### C. Focus – Passion Week.

**A surprising feature of the Gospels is the focus they have on just one week in Christ's life.** Whatever happened during that week must be highly significant. The week climaxes with the saving death of the God-man. No event in human history supersedes this one. "Since all four spent much time on Christ's last week, with the real focus on His death and resurrection, this is what they deemed to be the major purpose of His incarnation. He came to conquer sin and death through his crucifixion and resurrection." (New Testament Survey, Merrill Tenney, p. 66)

- Matthew devotes 25% to the last week of Christ's life (chapters 21-27).
- Mark discusses it in chapters 11-15 (31%).
- Luke gives over 21% (chapters 19-23).
- John emphasizes this week more than the others; he spends chapters 12-19 (38%) presenting it. Furthermore, chapters 13-19 present the events of a single day during that week.

Overall the Gospel writers intended to focus on the good news of Christ's perfect life and atoning death. The Gospels made no attempt to be a comprehensive biography. They are carefully composed, selective records of the greatest life and death of all time.

Book	Author	Audience	Emphasis	Genealogy	Element
Matt - 28	A disciple publican	Jews	King	Traced back to Abraham & David	130x quotes & allusions 37x Kingdom of Heaven/God
Mark - 16	Friend of Peter, well to do	Romans	Servant	No gen.	“immediately” 40+; 2 of 3 begin w/ “And”
Luke - 24	Friend of Paul, physician	Greeks	Son of Man	Traced back to Adam	Men sinners-16x; 3x Samar fav 43x women; no else Lk 15/19:10
John - 21	Disciple fisherman	World	Son of God	No gen.	Jn 20:30, 31; Sign - 17x; belief -100x; life - 36x more x's than others

Our intent is to focus on the Gospel of Mark. Let us consider several primary thoughts concerning Mark's account.

## II. Comments concerning the book of Mark

“The Gospel of Mark is a succinct, unadorned yet vivid account of the ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.” (Walter W. Wessel, “Mark,” in Expositor's Bible Commentary, [Zondervan, 1984], 8:603).

- A. Many suggest the Gospel of Mark largely consists of the preaching of Peter arranged and shaped by John Mark. (NIV Study Bible, 1895).

In Mark 1:10, he uses a strong word to describe the heaven's opening (schizo).

“This highlights Mark's frequent use of stronger or more dramatic terms than we find in the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke. The early church was unanimous in saying that Mark's Gospel gives us the preaching of Peter. It seems clear that these strong expressions were used by Peter in his preaching, reflecting his vigorous personality.” (Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the New Testament, 30, 31)

- B. Who was John Mark?

1. His mother's name was Mary (Acts 12:12).

2. His cousin (or uncle) was Barnabas (Col. 4:10).
3. He joined Barnabas and "Paul" in ministry (Acts 12:25; 13:5).
4. He was a point of contention between Barnabas and Paul after the first "missionary" journey (Acts 15:37-30).
5. Paul eventually reconciled with John Mark and found him profitable for ministry (2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24).
6. John Mark was a close associate to the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 5:13).

The relationship between Barnabas, Paul, Peter, and John Mark is of great interest. Barnabas in gifting was an encourager and mentor. He had an additional interest in John Mark because of "blood ties." Paul was driven and of a "no-nonsense" temperament. Whereas Peter knew what it was like to fail in ministry and perhaps took an interest in John Mark. Together the Holy Spirit uses each of the individuals to enable John Mark to persevere in faith.

If nothing else, John Mark is a picture of not losing faith in people even when it appears they have failed miserably in their commitment to the Lord.

C. A date of 50's or early 60's is assigned to Mark's gospel.

"Although we cannot be certain of it, the best estimate for dating the Gospel is the last half of the decade AD 60-70. This date embraces the period immediately following the great fire of AD 64, when intense persecution began to be directed against Christians in Rome. There are good reasons to believe that the Gospel of Mark was written to meet this crisis in the Roman church." (Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in Expositor's Bible Commentary, [Zondervan, 1984], 8:608).

The dating and the audience coincide to give us a graphic picture as to the circumstances of the times.

D. His audience points to the church of Rome or at least to Gentile readers.

"Since Mark's Gospel is traditionally associated with Rome, it may have been occasioned by the **persecutions of the Roman church** in the period c. A.D. 64-67. The famous fire of Rome in 64 - probably set by Nero himself but blamed on Christians - resulted in widespread persecution. Even martyrdom was not unknown among Roman believers. Mark may be writing to prepare his readers for this suffering by placing before them the life of our Lord. There are many references, both explicit and veiled, to suffering and discipleship throughout his Gospel (see 1:12-13; 3:22, 30; 8:34-38; 10:30, 33-34, 45; 13:8, 11-13)." (NIV Study Bible, 1896).

It was written from Rome and to Roman or at least to Gentile Readers. (Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in Expositor's Bible Commentary, [Zondervan, 1984], 8:608, 609).

This context helps us understand the message of Mark and the picture it provides for us of Jesus Christ.

- D. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark contains no genealogical record of Jesus Christ.

Most would agree that Mark's purpose in writing did not necessitate the inclusion of a genealogical record.

- E. It is a busy and breathless book.

A distinctive characteristic of Mark's style is his use (some 40 plus times) of a Greek word that has been variously translated by "at once, immediately, quickly." Notice the occurrences of this idea in just the first chapter of Mark's account ([**READ**] 1:10, 18-21, 29-31, 42, 43).

"The frequent use of this adverb is characteristic of Mark and gives his Gospel a certain air of **breathlessness**." (Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in Expositor's Bible Commentary, [Zondervan, 1984], 8:622).

His style is graphic as seen in 1:10 with the heavens being torn open and the Holy Spirit thrusting Him into the wilderness to be tempted (1:12).

- F. It is an awe-filled book.

His audience is often stunned by His words and works. Notice the following passages in the following chapters ([**READ**] 1:22, 27; 2:12; 5:20; 9:15; etc.). Who Jesus is and what He does has a significant impact on His immediate audience.

- G. It is a "silent" book.

Throughout the work, the audience is asked not to say anything about His presence. Notice the following thoughts ([**READ**] 3:12; 7:36; 8:30). There is intent throughout the book.

- H. Broad outline for Mark's Gospel

1. The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (1:1-13)
2. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (1:14-6:29)
3. Withdrawal from Galilee (6:30-9:32)
4. Final Ministry in Galilee (9:33-50)
5. Jesus' Ministry in Judea and Perea (chap. 10)
6. The Passion of Jesus (chaps. 11-15)
7. The Resurrection of Jesus (chap. 16)

APPLICATION: (What's the NEXT STEP? Let us leave with "5" practical steps).

Although we look at the study as being informational, we cannot overlook the direct and immediate implications of the gospel. Jesus Christ saves sinners. He transforms life from the inside out. There is life altering consequences when confronted by the good news about Jesus Christ.

1. Do you trust Jesus as the gospel?
2. We should always see our lives against the backdrop of the bigger picture.
3. What you and I believe as Christians is the good news of God for the salvation of His people.
4. We need to constantly fall in love with Jesus Christ who *is* the gospel.
5. We should study the gospels on a regular basis in order that we might know who God is and what He has done for us.