

Mark 1:1-15 | Jesus Christ: Son of God, Defeater of Satan

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This year, we are going to spend our time reading through the Gospel of Mark. If you are familiar with the Bible, you might know that there are four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And Mark is like the little brother to the rest of them. It's short, it's written very concisely, and it is also written with a very easy to understand grammar, more so than any other gospel.

Why this matters to us, is it is most likely that Mark wrote this gospel while he was imprisoned in Rome and he was writing it for a Roman-Gentile audience. And what I mean by that is that he was writing to people who were neither Christian nor Jew. He wrote to a people who had no idea who Jesus was, and he wrote to a people who really couldn't care less about tons of Old Testament prophecies.

Mark wrote this gospel for university campuses. He wrote this for people with short attention spans, for people who may have heard the folk tales about Jesus, but don't really know the true story, he wrote this for the hustle and bustle of an intellectual Rome, but he did in an easily understandable way. But what I love most about this book, is that in its short length and snappy writing, Mark wants us to know who Jesus is, and he wants us to be transformed by that.

And this is important to us because even though we live in a culture which is becoming increasingly post Christian, there is still a lot of Jesus talk going on out there. But you see in order to respond rightly to Jesus, you have to know Jesus well. You have to know who he is, why he came, and what it meant.

For instance: If a crazy drunk ran into this room and yelled at us all to run. We probably wouldn't. If a student who looked just like you ran in and yelled the same thing, we would probably consider it a little more. If a professor came in and warned us, most of us would probably leave, but probably slowly, and with a lot of questions. But if a man ran in here with a Bomb squad vest and yelled for you to go, we would leave with haste, with clarity, and in confidence that we should obey.

You see our response to someone is directly proportional to their perceived authority in our life, and Mark is writing this book not just to tell us who Jesus is, but to show us who Jesus is and to force us to respond ourselves to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So let's **pray**, and look at the opening section of the book of Mark.

Let's start by looking at first verse of the book of Mark: **Mark 1:1-8**.

Now I love how Mark starts because he skips the whole Christmas story. He cuts out the birth in a manger, and the scene with the wise men, the full inn, the shepherds...all that stuff. Now all that stuff is important in one sense. But in our culture we have a tendency to promote Christmas over Christ.

Facebook is the place I go when I want to be disappointed in humanity, and I just saw, in August, a ton of articles and cheese pictures saying "Keep Christ in Christmas." And that's fine, I'm all for it. But it does no good to keep Christ in Christmas if Christ is not also in our proclamation.

While it was important that Jesus was born of a virgin, and the scene with the shepherds and wise men add to the royal announcement of the Christ, Christ didn't come to be remembered as a baby, he came to be

remembered as a savior who lived, worked and died for our salvation. Christmas doesn't save people, the person and work of Christ does.

Instead what Mark begins with is a proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Here we see the first thing we learn about Christ tonight: **Jesus is the Son of God.**

This is all part of Mark's attempt to establish a right view of Jesus, so that we can respond rightly to him.

What does that mean? Son of God. Does it mean the same thing as when I say, "Owen the son of Tyler?"

Well yes, and no. Yes in the sense that Owen is made from the same material I am made, and relates relationally to me as my son. But no in the sense that God is not material, nor man. Nor was Christ ever born before he came to earth. Jesus existed in eternity forever with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

We see this in **John 17:24**. It wasn't that Jesus didn't exist, and then he existed. It's that Jesus always existed, but in humility entered this world born of a woman, but also born as God.

You see the phrase son of God shows Jesus' relationship to the Father, he seeks to submit to and follow God the Father's will, but it also shows the nature of Jesus, he is God.

Jesus is God. This was essential to Mark's evangelism, and it is essential to our salvation. Mark who doesn't like to use a lot of Old Testament quotations thinks this is so important that he quotes an Old Testament passage which proves this point.

Mark 1:2-3. Now at first glance, this passage seems to be about John the Baptist, and it is. This prophecy, as we have seen, is here to set up John the Baptist as the one who bears witness to the one to come. But to understand the secondary weight of these passages we need to look at the two passages that Mark is quoting from here: **Mal 3:1, Is 40:3**. While these passages point to John the Baptist as the proclaimer, don't lose the picture of who he is proclaiming. He isn't proclaiming a sub-God, he isn't proclaiming a good teacher, he isn't proclaiming a moral example, he isn't proclaiming an equal opportunity encourager, he is proclaiming the way of God himself.

So now we meet this voice in the wilderness. Jonny the redneck prophet. He is roaming around in the wilderness, eating bugs, dressed like an Old Testament prophet, shopping at Cabela's, and the crazy thing is, he is popular.

Mark hints at this, he says that people were coming from Judea and all of Jerusalem and there were coming to him, confessing their sins, and receiving a baptism of repentance. The other gospel writers tell us a little more of John's followers. On one hand you had people who hated what John the Baptist was doing, because he was pointing out sin, yet on the other hand you had crowds of people proclaiming him as the next Elijah, the next great prophet, one who should be followed and worshipped. Some of John's followers were even skeptical of this Jesus and warned John of him so that his followers wouldn't become Jesus followers.

But look at what John's message was: **Mark 1:7**,

You see John knew that he was just a door man. He knew not only that someone was coming after him, but someone unique was coming after him.

That uniqueness is on display in the next portion of Mark, **9-11**.

Do you see the affirmation of Jesus here? I was baptized a handful of years ago, and you know what happened. Not a lot. But when Jesus was baptized, God tore open the heavens, the Holy Spirit flew out of

there like a dove, and landed on Jesus to which God, the cosmic God of the universe said: “This is my beloved son, with you I am well pleased.”

What had Jesus done up until this point? Not a lot, he hadn’t started his ministry, he hadn’t preached, hadn’t healed, hadn’t done a miracle, hadn’t died on the cross and yet God is pleased with him? How? Because all that Jesus did is only relevant because of who Jesus is. God is pleased with Jesus because he is pleased at the reflection of his own glory.

This puts our fear of man in perspective doesn’t it? We try to impress professors, parent’s, bosses, girls, and yet through Jesus and who he is, we can have the God of heaven look at us and be filled with pleasure.

Now in the gospel of John we get a little added story after Jesus’ baptism: **John 1:35-37**. This is important. Because John was wildly popular with the people who followed him. And yet, John’s primary goal was not to be followed, but to point people to the one who should be followed, Jesus.

This is a goal of GCF, we want you to be a follower of Jesus over a follower of people who proclaim Jesus. Jesus came, Jesus spoke, Jesus died and rose again. Follow him. Follow Jesus over everything else because he is the Son of God.

This brings us to the final two things Mark is going to teach us about Jesus.

We find the second point here: **Mark 1:12-13**. This is probably the briefest account of Jesus’ temptation in the desert, but it is still wildly important.

We see in the other gospel’s that while in the desert Jesus was tempted by Satan in various ways, he was offered the world if he would just worship Satan. Satan tried to trip Jesus up by using scripture against him, but Jesus rightly interpreted the word of God. And Satan threw everything he had at Jesus, and Jesus didn’t sin.

You see this is important because in Romans Jesus is called the second Adam. You see the first Adam was tempted by Satan in the garden. To the first Adam, Satan said, did God really say? And the first Adam fell to Satan. Bringing in sin, and pain, and death. Hundreds of years later God establishes his people and yet his people choose to rebel against him so God sends them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, and in those forty years rather than repenting, the people chose to sin all the more. Jesus, as the true Israel went into the desert for 40 days, was tempted by Satan himself, and came away victorious.

What does this teach us about Jesus? Well after Adam first sinned, God cursed the serpent, the man, and the woman, but in **Gen 3:15** God gave a glimpse of hope. The offspring of God had come, and he is stronger than the devil. That’s our second point tonight: **Jesus is victorious over Satan**.

You see man couldn’t save himself. Ever since Adam man fought against sin, fought against the devil and came away wounded. We had no power over sin, we had no power over our hearts, no power over our death sentence. Our hearts desired evil, and lust, and deceit, and power, and hatred, and greed and we were slaves to our own desires. But Jesus came. And before he even went to the cross for our sins, Jesus was lead into the wilderness to be tempted as a foretaste of the ultimate defeat which is yet to come.

Jesus came not just to bring us salvation, he came to defeat sin and the devil once and for all. And it’s not a fair fight.

Jesus beat temptation so that through his power those who believe in him may no longer be held by the power of the devil. Jesus came as a lamb, but he goes out like a lion.

Here are our last two verses in closing: **Mark 1:14-15**. After Jesus was validated as God himself, and after he proved he is stronger than Satan, he went to preach. The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel.

You see, it is only after we see the authority of Jesus that we are called to respond by believing in him. That's why we named this series "Who Is Jesus." Because the world needs to answer that question.

You need to answer that question, and I hope if you can't answer that question that you join us as we continue to look through the book of Mark.

You see the message of Jesus is unique from any message you will ever hear. It is different from any message ever preached in the Old Testament. Because you may hear people telling you to repent from your sins. You may hear people telling you to believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. You may hear people asking you to respond. But when Jesus said "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." He wasn't simply preaching a message, he was prophesying his death.

Jesus was the means to his own message, with out his death on a cross there would be no repentance and there would be no gospel. The final point tonight is **Jesus is the Gospel**.

This will be the theme throughout this book, and I pray this truth statement grasps your heart. I hope you don't simply hear a preacher telling you to believe, but I pray you see that God himself came to the earth, conquered Satan and died on a cross so that you may believe the gospel for yourself.

What do you do with this message? You pray that Jesus shows himself to you as who he really is. I want those of you who are Christians to look at Marks introduction and pray that not only does Jesus become more clear to you, but that Jesus becomes more clear on this campus through the faithful proclamation of his people.