

Study Guide: “The Beginning of the Good News” (Mark 1:1-8)

- **The Gospel as Urgent Good News**
 - Mark opens with “The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1).
 - “Gospel” (euangelion) was not originally a religious word but history-shaping, life-changing news (e.g., victories, royal births). Mark presents Jesus as the ultimate world-shattering announcement.
 - The Gospels are **not biographies** but purposeful accounts written so that readers would believe Jesus is the Christ.
- **John the Baptist Prepares the Way**
 - Fulfills Isaiah 40:3: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”
 - John preaches “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” in the desert (Mark 1:4).
 - People from Jerusalem and Judea confess sins and are baptized (Mark 1:5).
 - John’s message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:7-8).
- **The Incarnation: Yahweh Has Come**
 - Mark boldly identifies Jesus with Yahweh (the LORD of Isaiah 40:3), the holy covenant name of God revealed to Moses (Exodus 3).
 - Christianity uniquely claims the transcendent God became human in Jesus—neither pantheistic (God is in everything) nor strictly distant like Judaism/Islam.
 - This event shatters worldviews and removes the need to earn God’s favor; instead, we respond in gratitude.
- **Call to Decisive Response**
 - Jesus’ coming demands action—no neutral ground. Mark uses “immediately” (or synonyms) 41 times to convey urgency.
 - Real encounters with Jesus provoke extreme responses: hatred and rejection, fearful avoidance, or complete surrender (“Command me”).
 - We are invited to kneel, lay down our lives, and live under His lordship every day.

Quotable Quotes from the Sermon

“Nothing hinders evangelism more than the widespread loss of confidence in the truth, relevance, and power of the gospel.” -John Stott. (*Context: Speaking to believers about the need to be rooted in the real Jesus before sharing Him effectively.*)

“The coming of Jesus calls for decisive action. It calls for a response.” (*Context: Explaining the urgency in Mark’s fast-paced Gospel.*)

“They either hated him and wanted to wipe him out. They were afraid of him and tried to get as far away from him as possible. Or they knelt at his feet and laid the sword of their life at his feet and said, “Command me.”

(Context: Describing the three historic responses to the real Jesus—reject, avoid, or fully surrender.)

Questions for Further Thought

1. When I encounter the real Jesus (not a comfortable version), which of the three responses (hate/avoid/surrender) best describes my current heart attitude, and what is one area I need to surrender more fully this week?
2. How does the truth of the incarnation (God becoming human in Jesus) change the way I approach daily life—especially moving from fear/earning to gratitude? (See John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8.)
3. Who in my life needs to hear this “beginning of the good news,” and how can I prepare the way like John the Baptist through my words and actions?

Scriptures to meditate on this week: Mark 1:1-8, Isaiah 40:3, John 1:14, James 5:16. *May the Holy Spirit give us eyes to see and hearts to fully respond to the real Jesus.*