

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

## The Preaching of John the Baptist

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>a</sup>

2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,<sup>b</sup>

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight—”

<sup>4</sup>John the Baptist appeared <sup>c</sup> in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem;

and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

We hear from one of the four Gospels at every Mass. For the Sunday readings, the Church has a three-year cycle. We are currently in year B and hear mostly from the Gospel of Mark.

Last month at Pint with a Priest we talked about Mark's Gospel, what we know of the author, the historical events that may have influenced what he included, and who he was writing to. Here are a few points...

Scholars tell us that The Gospel of Mark was written in Greek around the late 60s A.D., for a gentile audience, and probably in the city of Rome. Rome was not an easy place to be a Christian, especially during Emperor Nero's persecutions from 54 until 68 A.D.

The earliest traditions tell us that Mark was a disciple of St. Peter and wrote down Peter's recollections of Jesus. Mark is much harder on

Peter than the others. It seems Peter wanted to share his weakness and glorify Jesus.

Mark is the shortest and most action-packed gospel. The story starts quickly as John the Baptist preaches in the wilderness. Jesus comes to be baptized and the heavens are ripped open at the sound of the Father's voice. Mark takes us from scene to scene rapidly (he uses the word “immediately” 35 times).

The story line of Mark begins on the banks of the River Jordan in the wilderness, moves into Galilee then across the Jordan to Jericho and then up to Jerusalem, where Jesus' identity is fully revealed as Messiah, Suffering Servant and Eucharistic Lord.

Mark emphasizes discipleship, and seems to end his Gospel with the empty tomb, leaving it to his readers to decide how they will respond.



One of the earliest known fragments of the Gospel of Mark from around 200 A.D. It is known as P137. It was discovered in 1903 when archaeologists excavated an ancient Egyptian rubbish dump containing thousands of papyrus fragments. It was only recently identified and published.

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK**  
 "THE BEGINNING OF THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD."

**ACT 1: GALILEE**  
 1-8a WHO IS JESUS?  
 BEHOLD, I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOU... TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD. (ISAIAH 40:3 & MALACHI 3:1)  
 JOHN THE BAPTIST  
 YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON. (MATT 3:17)  
 GOD'S RESCUE OPERATION FOR THE WORLD  
 CONFRONTATION WITH EVIL  
 INVITATION TO LIVE UNDER GOD'S REIGN BY FOLLOWING JESUS  
 GOD'S KINGDOM HAS COME NEAR! (MATT 23:13)  
 JESUS BRINGS GOD'S KINGDOM  
 BE HEALED!  
 YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN.  
 ...AND GETS DIVERSE RESPONSES  
 WHO IS HEZ?  
 WHERE DID HE GET THIS WISDOM?  
 ONLY GOD CAN FORGIVE SINS!  
 YOUR POWER COMES FROM THE DEVIL!  
 WE'LL FOLLOW YOU!  
 WE'LL FOLLOW YOU!  
 PARABLES ABOUT THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S KINGDOM  
 THE FOUR SOILS  
 RECEPTIVE NOT RECEPTIVE  
 THE MUSTARD SEED  
 JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, BUT NOT THE KIND PEOPLE EXPECTED.  
 WHAT DO THESE PARABLES MEAN?  
 WHO IS HE REALLY?  
 DISCIPLES

**ACT 2: "ON THE WAY"**  
 8b-10 WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR JESUS TO BE THE MESSIAH?  
 CONVERSATION #1 (8:27-38)  
 SUFFERING SERVANT ISAIAH 53  
 WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?  
 YOU'RE THE MESSIAH!  
 VICTORIOUS KING! DEFEAT ROMANS  
 FOLLOWING JESUS:  
 - IS LIKE KING  
 - MEANS REJECTING VIOLENCE & TRIBE  
 - ACTS OF SERVICE & LOVE  
 THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO BECOME A SERVANT & GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY. (10:45)  
 CONVERSATION #2 (9:30-37)  
 CONVERSATION #3 (10:32-45)  
 THIS IS MY BELOVED SON. (MATT 17:5)  
 JUST LIKE... GOD'S GLORY? MT. SINAI (EXODUS 16-20) & THE TABERNACLE WHO MET GOD ON MT. SINAI  
 MOSES (EXODUS 33)  
 JESUS is the EMBODIMENT of GOD'S GLORY  
 THE GLORIOUS GOD SUFFERING and DYING for HIS PEOPLE  
 ELIJAH (1 KINGS 19)

**ACT 3: JERUSALEM**  
 11-16 HOW JESUS BECOMES KING  
 SAVE US, SON OF DAVID!  
 JESUS' ROYAL ENTRY  
 YOU'VE TURNED MY HOUSE INTO A DEN OF THIEVES!  
 JESUS ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY OVER THE TEMPLE  
 WHAT AUTHORITY DO YOU HAVE?! LET'S KILL HIM!  
 JESUS CONDEMNS ISRAEL'S LEADERS  
 PREDICTION OF JERUSALEM'S DOWNFALL  
 - THE CITY & TEMPLE WILL BE DESTROYED WITHIN A GENERATION  
 - THE DISCIPLES WILL BE PERSECUTED  
 - JESUS WILL ONE DAY RETURN.  
 OLD MEANING: LIBERATION FROM SLAVERY DEATH THROUGH THE PASSOVER GAMES  
 NEW MEANING: LIBERATION FROM SIN & DEATH THROUGH THE DEATH of the MESSIAH  
 THE LAST SUPPER  
 JESUS ISN'T HERE! HE'S RISEN FROM THE DEAD & WILL MEET YOU UP IN GALILEE!  
 DARKNESS  
 THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD! (MATT 27:54)  
 FIRST PERSON IN THE STORY TO GRASP JESUS' IDENTITY  
 THE CRUCIFIED SON OF GOD IS THE MESSIAH!  
 "THEY FLED FROM THE TOMB IN TERROR, TELLING NO ONE, FOR THEY WERE AFRAID..." THE END?

**THE ENDING OF MARK**  
 GO AND ANNOUNCE THE GOOD NEWS!  
 NOT ORIGINAL (ONLY FOUND IN LATER MANUSCRIPTS)  
 LOST?  
 NEVER FINISHED?  
 THE ABRUPT ENDING IS INTENTIONAL  
 MARK EMPHASIZES THE SHOCKING CLAIM THAT THE CRUCIFIED & RISEN JESUS IS THE MESSIAH.  
 THE LACK OF CLOSURE FORCES YOU TO ASK: WILL YOU RUN AWAY, OR RECOGNIZE THE CRUCIFIED JESUS AS YOUR KING?