



# SIGNPOSTS :

A Journey in  
The Gospel of Mark :

## The Gospel is Our Life

*A SignPost in Mark 1*

*For the people of the Inversion Fellowship*

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*By Reid S. Monaghan*

### MARK 1:1-15 ESV

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will 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 appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore 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 strap 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.” <sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” <sup>12</sup>The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him. <sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the **gospel**.”

### KEY SIGHTINGS FOR TONIGHT

#### JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD

The identify of Jesus kicks off the gospel of Mark and the titles he is given give us great insight as to who he really is. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the one anointed and appointed by God to be the prophet, priest and king for all peoples bringing us to God. He is not simply a human being, but the preexistent Son of God who became a man to redeem a people fulfilling the promises of Scripture.

#### THE FOCUS OF THE WILDERNESS

It is interesting to see that the activity of God is not always staged in the centers of human power and prosperity. Rather God comes to his people and reveals himself to them in the lonely and harsh place known as the wilderness.

#### THE GOSPEL IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We never “get beyond the gospel” in our Christian life to something more “advanced.” The gospel is not the first “step” in a “stairway” of truths, rather, it is more like the “hub” in a “wheel” of truth. The gospel is not just the A-B-C’s of Christianity, but it is the A to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we all make progress in the kingdom.

—Tim Keller

## A TALE OF TWO TITLES

There are many names or titles given to Jesus in the Scriptures. He is called the lion of the tribe of Judah, the rose of Sharon, the son of man, the great I AM, the Lamb of God, the Lilly of the valley, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd, the Word of God, the Light of the World, Savior, Lord. Indeed, you could keep going as this just scratches the surface.<sup>1</sup> Yet perhaps two of the most significant and radical titles ascribed to Jesus in Scripture appear in startling fashion in the prologue to the gospel of Mark. In one simple verse, something unbelievable is seen: *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* Now for many of us the names here are so familiar that the awe they bring may be lost to us. We are so used to hearing or reading “Christ” and “Son of God” in reference to Jesus without really pausing to see what they mean. Christ has become something like Jesus’ last name...sort of like Fred Jones—but Jesus Christ. Son of God is taken for granted so we forget the radical nature of calling a human being such a thing. Lets look very briefly at each of these.

### Jesus, Who is the Christ

The term Christ is derived from the Greek term Χριστός or Christos. Rather than a last name it is a title which means “anointed one of God” its Old Testament equivalent is *Messiah*. The term comes from the practice by which certain people were “anointed” or called by God and set apart for a special ministry. In the OT the priests (Exodus 29:7, 21), prophets (1 Kings 19:16), and kings (1 Samuel 10:1) were anointed with oil for their specific roles with God’s people. When Jesus is called the Christ, or the Messiah, it simply states that Jesus is the completion of the work of God in history in whom all the covenant promises are fulfilled. He is the great high priest connecting human beings to God. He is the great prophet incarnating and speaking to us the Word of God. He is the great king that we long for who will benevolently rule for all eternity. To say Jesus is the Christ is to say that the hopes and longings of Israel—the hopes of all who will become children of God by faith—are fulfilled. The promised coming is on the ground—this is a new beginning, nothing will ever be the same.

### Jesus, The Son of God

Muslim people have misinterpreted this title for years. The term Son is many times understood in the wrong context to mean that God had a physical offspring through copulation with a human being. It hasn’t help that Mormonism actually teaches this, but nonetheless this sort of thinking is not what Scripture means when Jesus is called the Son of God. Philosopher Peter Kreeft sheds great light on how this term was used in the time of Jesus.

*Son of a dog, is a dog, son of an ape an ape, son of God, is God — Jews were Monotheistic, only one God—  
Son of God is the divine title of Jesus and everyone at his time understood this title to mean just that.<sup>2</sup>*

In titling Jesus as the Son of God they were clearly stating that this human being was God become man. This was no ordinary person walking the ancient landscape—the world’s very creator, the second person of the triune God, was making an appearance.

In writing this inspired book, Mark structures the account of Jesus’ life, teaching, death and resurrection using these titles. - Christ and Son of God. Here in the prologue they land on us in the first words of the gospel. Jesus, the Messiah, God come to earth is on the scene. Everything is about to change. From the middle of Chapter 1 until the middle of the book Jesus is living out a ministry of healing, exorcism and authoritative preaching in the areas of Galilee and Judea. In Chapter 8 Peter makes a confession as to Jesus’ identity—“You are the Christ.” From this point the narrative is heading towards Jerusalem. Finally, at the end of the book another confession is made; this time the words are from a Roman centurion. After observing the death of Jesus on an executioners cross, the words are uttered—“Truly this man was the Son of God!”

### From the Wilderness to the Cross

The appearance of Jesus was not before the political powers and religious leaders, no, rather God came to his people in a dusty wilderness. Outside the pomp and regality of the powers that be, the man born in a humble manger, would now begin his ministry on the outskirts of town. From this lonely outpost would launch the most significant, world changing, universe changing work of all time. God would have it no other way. In the Exodus he led his people in a wilderness. In those days his people were disciplined and tested so that they would learn to trust God (Psalm 95:7-11). In Jesus coming to meet God and his people in the wilderness he will pass the test, be affirmed by the Father and by the Spirit launch his ministry onto the public scene. The Jesus release party took place not in a big ballroom or the hippest scene in town. It took place in the mysterious, dangerous and lonely place where God provides for and meets his people. He still calls to us in our own wilderness of sin and death today.

Where Mark begins his gospel he brings it full circle. He is recognized as the Christ, the Messiah and then he heads towards his ultimate mission of dying for the sins of the world. When this mission has been accomplished, a gentile, who would have access to God through Christ has his eyes open to what has just taken place. The crucified before him was indeed God. The coming resurrection would kick off the mission of the gospel in the world which continues into our day.

This gospel continues to shape peoples’ destinies in our day. The risen Jesus is still entering and saving lives today by the Holy Spirit sent into the world to glorify Jesus among his people. The gospel presented in Scripture is the defining story of our lives. We’ll close the junk drawer this week with some reflection on what we understand the gospel to be.



## THE GOSPEL, OUR A-Z NOT OUR ABCS

What is the gospel? So many times we associate the term with some simple truths that we believe in order to go to heaven and then move on with life. Let me be clear. The gospel is the story of God's redemption of people through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Yet the good news of Jesus Christ extends further into our lives than simply getting us to a preferred afterlife. Dr. Timothy Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City has written and spoken extensively on the gospel and its all encompassing role in our lives as followers of Jesus.

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The gospel is not something we hear at camp, pray a prayer and then get on with life. It is not just for people who are not Christians, but it is the story that must define our lives. If we do not see our relationships, our vocational choices, our time, our money, the use of our lives on the earth in light of the gospel our lives will not be transformed as they ought. The following is but a brief recounting of the gospel, the large story of Scripture, which invades us anew each day that we follow by faith in the way of Jesus. Let me summarize in short form, the good news found in Scripture.

### The Gospel

The gospel is the large story of Scripture of the working of God throughout time and history to bring about the redemption of his people and all things. The gospel is the story of the one Creator God, making all things, space, time, matter, energy in order to display his nature to his creatures. God created human beings in his own image and likeness to know him, love him, and reflect his character in the world to one another for their joy and his glory. Our first parents then gave God the proverbial Heisman, choosing to live life their way rather than God's way. They turned away from God and his provision for them, disobeying his commandment and thereby bringing fracture in their relationship with God, one another, and creation. God thereby cursed man and creation subjecting it to futility, bondage and decay. Yet God in his grace set about to redeem a people back to himself and has pursued us throughout history to this end. He promised in the very early days to send a human being, a seed of a woman to bring people back to God, reconciling them to himself and all things (Genesis 3:15) Throughout history he communicated with us and connected with us through prophets, men called to speak God's message to humanity. He made covenants with his people that would culminate in his sending of his own Son to the earth. He would be a Jewish person, the offspring of Abraham (Genesis 12, 15). He would fulfill God's commandments perfectly satisfying the demands of the law completely and live without sin (Hebrews 4.15). He would be a king to his people (2 Samuel 7) guiding them into a life of love, joy and peace. He would teach us the truth, show us perfected humanity, and ultimately die to take our place and pay the penalty for our own rebellion and sin (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). This person, Jesus, gave his life for us in what Martin Luther called the great exchange. Our sin was placed on him as he took our deserved judgment and punishment by dying on a cross. We then receive his righteousness and favor and good name before God the Father (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). We are thereby forgiven, brought back into relationship with God, our guilt is removed, God's wrath no longer is upon us, and we now become his followers and agents of reconciliation in the world. We receive all of this by his grace, none of it is earned by our works or actions. God will someday bring his kingdom in fullness where Jesus will completely and finally bring an end to all evil and usher in an eternal age of life and peace for all who follow him. Those who persist in rebellion against God will face his justice in Hell for all which was done in this life, eternally receiving the due penalty for sin.

### Seeing Through The Gospel

- *How I see myself*—It is devastating and liberating to see myself as a sinner saved by grace. I need to know that I was bad enough for Jesus to die and loved enough that he joyfully did so.
- *How I see and relate to others*—If God has forgiven me, how ought I to live with others who sin against me. If we cannot learn to forgive those who make mistakes, who hurt us, we will simply be unable to love and be loved in relationships.
- *How I understand where I live, where I work*—I will spend most of my time in my workplace and in the place I call home. How does the gospel speak to where I live, who I associate with, what people I deem lovable, how I seek to invest my free time?

Seeing the gospel applied to all areas of life is Christian faith. If we miss this we will make following Jesus about morality or a set of religious rules we create for ourselves and by which we judge others. Legalism and relativism are equally poisonous. Our sinfulness and need for grace should slay legalism in our hearts. God's holiness and leadership in our lives should lead us to embrace God's ways and follow him because we are accepted and loved by him.

### Notes

1. Names of Jesus, Rose Publishing—This handy little pamphlet has 50 names <http://www.rose-publishing.com/productdetails.cfm?PC=757>.
2. Norman Geisler and Paul Hoffman, *Why I Am a Christian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001). For a defense of the doctrine that Jesus is the Son of God and how this title is used see Part 5, Chapter 13—Peter Kreeft, *Why I believe Jesus is the Son of God*, 222-234.
3. See Timothy Keller—*The Sufficiency of Christ and the Gospel in a Post-Modern World* at [TheResurgence.com](http://TheResurgence.com)



## MY NOTES:

### Quick Review

- Seeing Through Stories
- SignPosts—Stop, Look, Listen
- Fullness of Time



### Walking Through Mark 1

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### The Centrality of the Gospel

