

# Announcing the King!

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Date: 05 November 2023

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     take note of that if you want to. But speaking of Mark's gospel, we are going to read together now in our Bibles in Mark's gospel, in Mark's gospel chapter one. Terry McCutcheon, the director of Hope for Glasgow, one of our elders here, is going to be preaching this morning from this passage.

So welcome to you, Terry. It's good to have you back with us in the pulpit this morning. If you need a Bible, stick your hand up. One of the stewards will gladly bring you one. There's some just out there at the sides and maybe some scattered about at the end of rows and so on.

But we're going to be reading the very beginning of Mark's gospel, second book of the New Testament after Matthew, and chapter one here, which is an announcement of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, the King. So Mark one, chapter one, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it's written in Isaiah, the prophet behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord and make his path straight. John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 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.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 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. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

And when he came up out of the water immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, you are my beloved son, with you I am well pleased.

[ 2 : 3 5 ]     And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals. And the angels were ministering to him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. And saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.

Amen. And may God bless to us his word. Amen. I invite you to take your Bibles and to turn with me again to Mark chapter 1.

Our growth groups in church are studying Mark's gospel and this week I've had a couple of text messages from some of the leaders saying, hey Terry it's great you're preaching from Mark. Mark, we've been nailing it these past few weeks. No pressure eh?

But I share an office with Brian Duncan and he leads a growth group. And I know through speaking with him, he hasn't been nailing anything. So if you're not in a growth group or if you're in Brian's growth group, you will probably learn something this morning. But for the rest of us, when we come to church, we don't always come to learn something new. But to be reminded of things that we better not forget.

- [ 4 : 15 ] So if this sermon whets your appetite for Mark's gospel, then if you speak to Willie or whoever is leading the service where you are, they may be able to point you in the direction of a growth group or Christianity Explored, whatever one is more benefit for you.
- Well let us ask for the Lord's help this morning. Make the book live to us, O Lord. Show us thyself within thy word. Show us ourselves and show us our saviour.
- And make the book live to us. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Announcements are made every day in the world. On the national and on the international stage.
- Now we may find these things informative and interesting, but most of them don't have any real direct bearing on our lives personally. Nor as we live our lives here day to day in Glasgow.
- Now we may hear these things and have some emotional response to them, but there are other announcements that are deeply personal, that have a tremendous effect on us, and can change our lives and the course of our lives forever.
- [ 5 : 24 ] She said, yes, you're having triplets. Your grandfather is dead. Now I am sure there have been announcements like these in each of our lives, maybe even recently, that are deeply personal, deeply emotional, and have affected and changed our lives forever.
- The verses we have before us this morning are all about an announcement. The gospel is neither a discussion nor a debate.
- It is an announcement, said Dr. Paul Rees. And the announcement is, the King has come. And I am absolutely convinced there has never been an announcement made that has had far-reaching consequences for every human being on the planet as the announcement we have before us this morning in the opening verses of Mark's gospel.
- It demands a response from every human being. And the response we have will have implications on our lives. And not just while we're here alive on planet Earth, but will have implications on our lives for all eternity.
- Well, firstly, in verse 1, we have Mark announces the King. Mark announces the King. I am sure that most folks, even if they're not churchgoers, could name the authors of the four gospels.
- [ 6 : 51 ] Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Whether they could tell us anything about the authors or their gospels would be another question altogether. So I suppose the first question we need to ask here is, who is Mark?
- Or to give him his full name, who is John Mark? Who is the man? We will get to his message in a minute, but who is the man? Well, Mark first appears in the pages of our Bible in the book of Acts, in chapter 12, 25, through to chapter 13, verse 13.
- And we read in these verses, Mark joined the missionary team of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, who was also Mark's cousin. He joins their missionary team as an assistant, a sort of an apprentice.
- But for reasons we aren't told, he left them in the midst of the work, chapter 13, verse 5, and went back to Jerusalem. Well, a couple of chapters later, in Acts 15, 36 to 41, Barnabas raises the question again with the Apostle Paul, whether his cousin Mark should join them again in a second missionary journey.
- The Apostle Paul was unwilling to take him with them. He thought it best not to take someone who had backed out before. And I've often imagined the Apostle Paul saying, John who?
- [ 8 : 13 ] John Mark? No chance. He's not coming with us. These missionary journeys are not for the faint-hearted, you know. He's a mummy's boy. As soon as it gets difficult, he will disappear again.

No chance. He is not coming with us. Well, whatever way the Apostle Paul put it, Paul and Barnabas fell out because we are told that Barnabas and Paul had a sharp disagreement about this.

So much so, the missionaries separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and Paul took Silas with him and they went on their separate missionary journeys.

Now remember Barnabas, whose name means the son of encouragement. He was an encourager by name and an encourager by nature. Remember, he had put an encouraging arm around Paul in his early days as a believer when a lot of the Christians were afraid of Paul.

They didn't believe him to be a real Christian. Well, here is Barnabas doing the same thing again with an encouraging arm around Mark. And it's also very encouraging to discover that Mark and Paul had reconciled and were united again.

[ 9 : 26 ] The past had been forgiven as Mark appears in three of the Apostle Paul's letters. In Philemon verse 24, Paul describes Mark as one of his fellow workers.

In Colossians chapter 4 verse 10, Paul writes this, Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you and Mark the cousin of Barnabas concerning whom you have received instructions.

You know about him, you know this guy. If he comes to you, welcome him. I'm sure Paul wrote these words to make sure none of the churches would ever hold Mark's past failures against him.

And in Paul's last recorded letter to Timothy, he urged Timothy in chapter 4 verse 11, get Mark, bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

Aren't these wonderful words of commendation from Paul about Mark? What a contrast to what he thought a number of years before. He thought he was useless and shouldn't be part of the missionary team.

[ 10 : 33 ] But not now. Now he is very useful to me for ministry. There's a whole sermon in that alone, isn't there? That past failure in the Lord's service does not bar us from future usefulness in the Lord's service.

Failure with the Lord is not final. I don't know about anybody else, but that's a tremendous encouragement to me. Perhaps that will be a word of encouragement to someone here this morning.

And the last time we come across Mark in the New Testament, we find that he is now ministering alongside the Apostle Peter. The Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 5.13 in his final greetings, and he refers to Mark as his son, his son in the faith.

Maybe these two men were drawn together as they could identify with one another as they both knew what it was to be a failure in the Lord's service. Remember the night the Lord Jesus Christ was arrested?

Peter denied knowing him three times. Well, whatever the reason these two men were drawn together, they were drawn together. And Peter views Mark as his son in the faith in the same way as the Apostle Paul viewed Timothy as his son in the faith.

[ 11 : 49 ] A trusted colleague, but more than that, one that the older Apostle pours himself into for ministry purposes. That's probably how we have Mark's gospel.

Peter poured himself into Mark so much that he was able to write his gospel. So who is John Mark? Well, he was probably on the fringes of the early band of disciples who followed the Lord Jesus.

He probably had family members like his cousin Barnabas who knew the Lord Jesus Christ personally. He is a man who had first-hand experience of the Apostles Paul and Peter.

He was trained and prepared for ministry by two Apostles. And I think I have done well being trained by Wally Phillip. This guy was trained by two Apostles.

He was a missionary, a preacher, an author of the gospel. And he was a man who had experienced failure as well as success in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 53 ] Well, that's Mark the man. But what about his message? Well, in the opening verse of Mark's gospel, he gives us a summary of what his book is all about. Verse 1.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Usually when you read a book or watch a film, it takes a bit of time to work out what the plot is and who the main characters are.

But no, not here with Mark. Mark wastes no time in getting to the main character and the main message of his book. And this wasting no time is a key feature of Mark.

Maybe as he looked back on his past failures in ministry, he thought he had wasted enough time. And so going forwards, he was not for hanging about. His gospel is the shortest of the four gospels.

It's action-packed, fast-moving, with the word immediately or at once being used over 40 times. Well, what does Mark tell us in verse 1? It's the beginning of the gospel.

[ 13 : 53 ] And what that word gospel means literally is good news. And friends, we need to be reminded of that, don't we? Whether we've been Christians for years or we're not yet Christians, maybe you're here this morning investigating the Christian message.

Whoever we are, we need to be reminded that Christianity is good news. It's not good advice that you would maybe get from self-help books. It's not good rules.

Thank goodness for that, because I don't know about you. I can't keep all the rules as it is. No, it's good news. In both Old Testament and Greek literature, the gospel, the evangelion, was commonly used to report a victory in battle.

When the Philistines defeated the troops of Saul, they sent messengers throughout the land to the Philistines to carry the good news, 1 Samuel 31. But to the audience that Mark was writing to, a world that was ruled by Rome, the word gospel usually focused on the Roman emperor, who was seen as a god.

When news was shared about the Roman emperor, it was conveyed as glad tidings, gospel, good news. But what is the gospel?

[ 15 : 06 ] What is the good news Mark is seeking to convey? Well, it is good news about a person, but it's not the Roman emperor. No, it is good news about Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.

It's a staggering claim, a staggering opening to his book. For what Mark is saying is that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah, the long-promised rescuer and liberator of God's people.

And he is also the rightful king, God's representative on earth. That is what is meant by the title, Son of God. Not that Jesus is God the Son, that he is divine.

No. Mark will get to the divinity of Jesus in good time. But here, this title is more to do with Jesus being God's king, God's representative on earth, just like Adam, the nation of Israel, and the kings of Israel were referred to as the Son of God.

And Mark says, this is good news. And it is good news. Religion, friends, religion is all about man seeking to reach God, to find God, and to please God by his own efforts.

[ 16 : 21 ] Religion is about man reaching up to God, whereas the gospel is all about God reaching down, coming to earth in the person of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.

The good news is all about Jesus. For in him, God has taken the initiative. God has broken into the human situation in the person of his Son.

And friends, we need to be absolutely clear about this. When Mark writes the gospel of Jesus Christ, he does not mean the gospel that Jesus preached, although Jesus does preach the gospel, verse 15.

No, it is Jesus Christ himself who is the gospel. He is the good news. It's not just something Jesus taught or something that Jesus did.

No, Jesus Christ himself is the good news. someone famously said, Jesus came not to preach a gospel, but in order that there might be a gospel to preach.

[ 17 : 22 ] Jesus is the good news. And friends, Mark was absolutely convinced of what he wrote in verse 1. These words can be so familiar to us that we hardly even engage with them.

But for Mark, for Mark to write these words down and to distribute them publicly was for him to risk the very real possibility of having his head chopped off or being thrown to the lions.

The context into which Mark was writing was into a world that was ruled by Rome and their emperor. The Roman emperor was regarded as king and God on earth.

So for Mark to write verse 1 was him saying, no, Jesus Christ is God's chosen king and in doing so putting his own life at risk.

And that's still the same today, friends. You can be into all the religion and spirituality that you want and no one will bat an eyelid. But as soon as you name and proclaim Jesus as king and start living your life like it, then you will face opposition and you will begin to make enemies.

[ 18 : 30 ] The world doesn't like to play second fiddle to anyone and certainly not to Jesus Christ. Mark was totally sold out in the truth of verse 1 that the good news of Jesus Christ was so good and so important that people needed to know about it and he was prepared to risk his own life so that the people of his day and everyday sins including our own could hear and read this good news.

But Mark goes on to say, don't think this appearing of Jesus Christ was unexpected, that it has just come out of the blue. No, because it hasn't. It was promised in the Old Testament and prepared for down the generations in history.

So after Mark announcing the king, we have in verses 2 and 3, the Old Testament announces the king. The Old Testament announces the king.

I suppose after reading verse 1, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we would maybe expect Mark to take us to Bethlehem and to the place of Jesus' birth like the other gospel writers Matthew and Luke.

But no, all of that stuff ends up in the cutting room floor. Mark takes us to the pages and the prophecies of the Old Testament. We could put verse 1 and the beginning of verse 2 together and read them like this.

[ 19 : 54 ] The beginning of the gospel as it is written in the prophets. You see, friends, Jesus Christ didn't appear in the world stage like an unwanted baby being left in the door of an orphanage.

No, it wasn't unexpected. Mark is saying that the origins of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ must be traced back to God's first dealings with his people.

And now, friends, what that means is this. The whole Bible, not just the New Testament, bears witness to Jesus Christ. The history of the Bible is his story from Genesis to Revelation and throughout the subject matter is one, Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament we might say Christ is predicted, prophesied, prepared for. In the Gospels, Christ is presented. In the book of Acts, Christ is preached.

In the epistles, the letters, Christ is expounded. And in the book of Revelation, Christ is unveiled in all his glory as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

[ 21 : 03 ] To whatever part of the scriptures we turn, it is always Christ that is the subject matter. And here in verse 2 and 3, Mark brings together prophecies from Malachi chapter 3, verse 1, and Isaiah 40, verse 3.

These prophets, hundreds of years earlier, looked forward to a day when God was going to do something new. This was all in God's plan. Prepare the way of the Lord and God is doing something new.

This time it's not just another prophet who will come. No, this time it will be none other than the Lord himself who is coming into the world. God is coming into the world in the human form and the person of Jesus Christ, God's final word to humanity.

And Mark's main emphasis here is to show that the gospel is not an emergency measure. it's not a desperate last minute attempt by God to retrieve or rescue something from a broken world, but a clear, decisive, well-prepared plan of action to deal with sin and to destroy the works and the kingdom of the devil and to establish the kingdom of God.

And before the king comes, well, a messenger will be sent to prepare the way. A voice crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord and make his path straight.

[ 22 : 27 ] And so, verse 4, John appears. So we have in verses 4 to 8, John the Baptist announces the king. John the Baptist announces the king.

The king is coming into the world and this would need prepared for. This is always the case with royalty, isn't it? If any of the royal family are visiting anywhere in Great Britain, then that place needs to be prepared for their visit.

45 years ago when I was just a wee boy aged 4, King Charles or Prince Charles as he was at the time came to the housing scheme that I was born in, a place in the northeast of the city, a place called Black Hill.

And we had a newly built community centre and Prince Charles was coming to officially open the community centre. and how my housing scheme needed prepared for his visit. The walls of the community centre that Prince Charles was to open were all covered in abusive graffiti about Charles.

On the morning of the official opening there was a team of painters frantically painting over the graffiti to prepare for Charles coming. And that's the old joke, isn't it? That the royal family think Great Britain smells of paint because there's always painters going ahead of them to prepare the way.

[ 23 : 47 ] Well, the rightful king, the only king, the king of kings, God himself was coming into the world and that would need preparing for. But friends, God doesn't send a painter to prepare the way.

No, he sends a preacher. He always sends a preacher, his messenger, the voice crying in the wilderness, preparing his way, making his path straight.

God always sends a preacher. That is his primary chosen instrument for proclaiming the gospel. And so, therefore, this helps us to see what the shape of any real gospel ministry needs to be.

The chief and central concern of any church is to ensure they have a proclamation ministry, a preaching ministry. Not a youth ministry, not a music ministry, not a student ministry, not an outreach ministry, or a homeless ministry, not even an addiction ministry like my own.

No, the chief and central concern of any church is to ensure they have a proclamation preaching ministry. And of course, other types of ministry will flow from this, but these other types of ministry cannot and should never be the central ministry of any church.

[ 25 : 05 ] And so, having preachers set apart for this task and the training of future preachers is also vital for any church fellowship to consider. God always sends a preacher to prepare the way.

And so, John comes. He is not a very attractive looking person. Verse 6. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and he ate locusts and wild honey.

John is certainly not the guy the kink sang about in 1965. One week he's in polka dots, the next week he's in stripes because he's a dedicated follower of fashion. Oh yes he is.

Oh yes he is. Oh no he is not. John is not a dedicated follower of fashion. In fact, John makes Edward Lobb look like a dedicated follower of fashion.

He's certainly not the type of person you would be inviting home for Sunday lunch, though if you did it wouldn't take much to feed him. You would maybe tell the kids to stay away from this fellow or threaten him with them if they didn't behave themselves.

[ 26 : 15 ] Now Mark highlights what John was wearing. Why? Well to show that John was definitely off the line of Old Testament prophets and in particular in the mold of one of the greatest Old Testament prophets, Elijah, who we have been getting to know from Phil's excellent series on One Kings.

We haven't yet got as far as two kings with Phil, but in 2 Kings 1-8 we have this description of Elijah. He wore a garment of hair with a belt of leather around his waist and he said, it is Elijah the Tishbite.

John's clothing made him stand out from his contemporaries as clearly and recognizably as Elijah and the message he preached. Both John and Elijah didn't dress attractively and their message was not too attractive either.

Calling out for spiritual reform and both calling out kings, Ahab and Herod on their sinful lives and ways. Verse 4, John appeared baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

At the heart of John's message was this, you need to get right with God, you need to repent, and that means you need a change of heart, a change of mind, a change of direction.

[ 27 : 34 ] You need to turn from your sin. You need to recognize that you are guilty before God and you need to change. John preached to them that they were under God's judgment and only by turning back to the Lord and His ways would they be ready when the long-promised Messiah came.

Friends, the starting point for John's message was repentance and forgiveness. What a contrast to many so-called Christian ministries who proclaim, come to Jesus, fulfill your potential.

Come to Jesus, have wealth, health, and prosperity. Come to Jesus, be healed of your ills and troubles. Come to Jesus, reduce your carbon footprint and look after the planet.

The starting point of John's message was repentance repentance and forgiveness. At the heart of any true Christian ministry must be the call to get right with God by turning away from sin and turning to God through Jesus Christ with no reliance on human worth or effort, seeking His forgiveness.

forgiveness. Well, how would the people respond to this unattractive person with this unattractive message? Verse 5, 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.

[ 29 : 04 ] There was what we would call a revival. People were flocking to John and having heard him preach, they were convicted by what he preached and they were baptized, confessing their sins, publicly demonstrating that they were really wanting to do business with God.

Friends, baptism wasn't new. It was common practice in Judaism, but it was usually reserved for Gentiles, people who were not Jews. People who were not Jews, who wished to identify with God's people, were baptized.

Therefore, these Jews undergoing baptism was a big deal because what they were saying is that they were just as far away from God as the Gentiles and they were expressing their desire to live a new life of repentance in response to God's forgiveness.

And friends, John totally understood that his role was a preparatory role, that he was a forerunner, that he was the warm-up act, so to speak, for the main event.

His concern in verse 7 and 8 was to point people away from himself and to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. And friends, this is a great lesson for all of us, all of us who are involved with the responsibility of teaching God's Word.

[ 30 : 27 ] And whatever shape or form that teaching takes place, whether it's from the pulpit or small groups of various kinds, we need to be like John the Baptist.

We need to be ourselves but never preach ourselves. We need to prepare the way, declare the way, and then get out the way. John was not in any way absorbed with his own success as a preacher, as many are.

No, his main concern was to point the people away from himself and to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. Hear what John says in John chapter 3, verse 30 about his ministry and that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John says, He, that is Jesus, He must become greater and I must become less. A great temptation for those in ministry, myself included, to say, yes, I'm very happy for the Lord Jesus Christ to become greater as long as I can become greater too.

But friends, that can never be so. John's main concern was to point people away from himself and to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Verse 7 and 8.

[ 31 : 39 ] And he preached, saying, After me comes He who's mightier than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

John explained to the people the significance of the Messiah's coming. He would be mightier than John, so much greater than John, that John doesn't even see himself as worthy to do even the most menial of tasks of untying his sandals.

But mightier too in terms of ministry. Verse 8. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. John is saying, what I have done is symbolic and is preparatory, but what He will do will be the reality.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. He won't just dip you under the water and get you wet. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. In other words, He will immerse you in the very presence of God.

He will bring God Himself into your life. I can do nothing like that, but the one who is coming, He can and He will. In the past, the Holy Spirit had been reserved mostly for kings and prophets, but now, says John, the new age was dawning that God had promised through the prophet Joel and many other prophets when God would pour out His Spirit in all flesh, bringing salvation.

[ 33 : 12 ] But this too would also announce the day of the coming judgment of God. As Joel writes, God will pour out His Spirit before the great and awesome day of the Lord.

So John was proclaiming the coming days of salvation and the coming days of judgment. John's message was simple. It was straight and it was uncompromising.

Repent. Turn around and let Jesus bring God into your life. Good news? Well, that depends on your response. But after John the Baptist announcing the king, we move now to verses 19 to 13.

God the Father announces the king. God the Father announces the king. After all these announcements about King Jesus coming, you would maybe expect Jesus to enter the stage amid a fireworks display or with a band playing or the Jewish equivalent.



But no, verse 9. He enters the stage amid the crowds. Amid the crowds that were going out to John. Just an ordinary looking guy among the crowd.

[ 34 : 26 ] Just as the prophet Isaiah writes, He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him and no beauty that we should desire Him. And He came from Nazareth.

He doesn't even come from the capital, Jerusalem. He comes from Nazareth, right out there in the sticks of Galilee and nothing town that was seen as a dodgy area.

And He comes with a crowd, takes His place in line with others, and wades out into the river to come face to face with John to be baptized. After all these announcements about His coming, what sort of an entrance is this?

But what Mark tells us in these verses is absolutely packed with clues to Jesus and identity and His mission. Just like a jar of Kenny Sewell's jam is packed full with taberies.

If the way Jesus arrives is unexpected, where He arrives is even more so, verse 9. He arrives to be baptized by John.

[ 35 : 29 ] John had been preaching and telling people to turn away from their sin and to be baptized to show that they were serious about getting right with God. But why should Jesus do that?

Why does Jesus need a baptism of repentance? Well, if we put verse 5 alongside verse 9, we can see that Mark shows us there is a difference in the baptism.

Verse 5, 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.

They were baptized confessing their sins. That wee phrase is missing from verse 9. For Jesus had no sins to confess. He was perfect.

We've already had strong hints about this. Verse 1, Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of God, God's King. Verse 3, He is the Lord God in the flesh.

[ 36 : 25 ] Verse 8, He is the one who will baptize with the Spirit of God. This is no ordinary man. This is God Himself in the flesh. So why does Jesus get baptized?

All those who were baptized by John were acknowledging they had sinned against the Lord and they deserved His judgment. Jesus joins them not because He is the same as them but because He wants to identify with them.

The sinless one is standing with sinners. Again, as the prophet Isaiah writes, He was numbered with the transgressors. And all of this points to His identity and His mission.

He is the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world. He has come to deliberately place Himself under the judgment and the condemnation of God on the behalf of sinners.

So John baptizes Him and the Lord Jesus has barely come up out of the water when there is this apocalyptic moment. The sky is torn open.

[ 37 : 33 ] The Spirit descends on Him like a dove and the voice of God the Father speaks from heaven. It's Genesis-like, isn't it? Like the creation story.

Here the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are together to fulfill their unique roles at the beginning of the new creation. The voice comes from heaven.

God the Father speaks to confirm and affirm the Lord Jesus Christ. And as God the Father speaks, He quotes His own words that He had spoken by the prophets.

And again, these are full of great clues as to the identity and mission of Jesus. Verse 11, And a voice came from heaven. You are my beloved Son.

With you, I am well pleased. Jesus is God's beloved Son, the one whom God loves. Jesus is the one with whom the Father is well pleased.

[ 38 : 32 ] Two Old Testament passages are used here. You are my beloved Son echoes the words of Psalm 2, verse 7, identifying Jesus as the glorious King.

And the second half, with you, I am well pleased. Are words from Isaiah 42, verse 1. That portion of Isaiah contains the servant songs.

The songs of the suffering servant of God. The voice of God the Father from heaven bears witness to Jesus' identity. He is the Son of God, the King in God's kingdom.

He is much loved and enjoys a unique relationship with the Father. The all-powerful King who will destroy the dominion of Satan. But he has also come to suffer for the sins of the people.

The servant who will be wounded, crushed, chastised for others, as the heart of the servant song puts it in Isaiah 53. It's commonly thought that the first eight chapters of Mark deal with the identity of Jesus, who Jesus is.

[ 39 : 39 ] And after Peter's confession in chapter 8, verse 29, that Jesus is the Christ, the identity question is answered. Lesson 1 is over. Now begins lesson 2.

Why did Jesus come? Mark chapter 8, verse 31. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed.

And after three days, rise again. We think that it is here in chapter 8 we are beginning to be taught that Jesus is the suffering servant of God.

But you see, friends, Christ and Him crucified does not begin in Mark chapter 8, verse 31. It begins in chapter 1, verse 11, in the baptism of Jesus.

The voice of the Father announces His glorious Son, the King, who will on the cross bear the judgment for sin and in doing so will defeat and undo the work of Satan.

[ 40 : 41 ] That's why we have verses 12 to 13. These verses are a foretaste of that great battle and that great victory. Christ will win in defeating Satan.

As the Apostle John writes in his first letter, the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. So Jesus does here in private what He will do publicly on the cross.

Again, the Apostle Peter writes, it says in Acts 10, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with Him.

And the Lord Jesus Christ will say Himself in chapter 3, verse 27 of Mark, but no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless He first binds the strong man, then indeed He may plunder his house.

The reason He was able to plunder Satan's house was because He had already bound Satan in these verses here. The Lord Jesus Christ did not succumb where all previous sons of God failed.

[ 41 : 56 ] Adam, the son of God, failed when He was tempted not in the wilderness but in the perfect surroundings of Eden. And Israel, the son of God, failed during their 40 years in the wilderness.

But not Jesus Christ, the son of God. During His 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan. The Lord Jesus Christ succeeded where the first man and every man's sins has failed.

The man Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan and he was tempted and tested to a far higher degree than any man could and yet he was without sin.

That's what the writer to the Hebrews writes in chapter 4. Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Jesus, the son of God, let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may find mercy and find grace to help in time of need. The man Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan.

[ 43 : 17 ] He bound Satan up and now, now he was ready to begin his public ministry and to rectify the disaster caused by Adam's fall.

Mark announces the king. The Old Testament prophets announce the king. John the Baptist announces the king. God the Father announces the king. And now, lastly, the king announces the kingdom.

Verse 14 and 15. The king announces the kingdom. Mark has now set the stage for the ministry of Jesus. John prepared the way.

The Father has affirmed the identity and mission of the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus has faced his inaugural conflict with the kingdom of darkness.

Verse 14. John has been arrested and imprisoned. His message of repenting of your sins has not gone down too well with King Herod, which Mark tells us about in chapter 6.

[ 44 : 21 ] John suffered for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the end paid for it with his life. John may have been silenced, but it is now that Jesus begins to speak.

The king now takes center stage. The one who is the gospel comes proclaiming the gospel. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. All prophets like John the Baptist point away from themselves and point to God, but not here with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ calls. He commands us to repent and believe the gospel, the good news. The good news that verse 1 has already told us is all about him.

So Jesus proclaims, the time is fulfilled. fulfilled. Well, what time? Well, the time that all the prophets spoke of. All the promises that God had made.

[ 45 : 24 ] The salvation plans and purposes of God are now fulfilled. Why? Well, because Jesus Christ, the Son of God is here. The kingdom of God is at hand.

God's rule will be established in the hearts and lives of men. And one day his rule will be established in all its fullness when he will wipe away all tears.

There will be no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain. The kingdom of God is at hand. Well, how is that so? Well, because Jesus the King is here.

The kingdom of God has been ushered in by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It has been inaugurated by his coming and his works of salvation and his death, his burial, his resurrection and ascension.

And it has continued as his people, his church, continue to preach the good news. And it will be consummated when the King returns to reign in all his fullness.

[ 46 : 27 ] So there can only be one sensible response to this announcement. And the King tells us what it is. And there is nothing more important in our lives, nothing more pressing in our lives that we can put this off.

We have to make sure we do what the King tells us. And that is this. He commands us. Repent. Believe the gospel.

That is the call of the kingdom. No matter who you are or where you are from or what your background is, this is God's command to you today.

Repent. Believe the good news of his King, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So there it is, friends. The greatest announcement this world will ever hear.

The greatest announcement you will ever hear. The King has come and He commands all of us to repent and believe the good news. The good news that is all about Him.

[ 47 : 35 ] And not only does He command us, He has also made it possible for us to do so by the laying down of His own life. There is a way back to God from the dark paths of sin.

There is a door that is open that you may go in. And at Calvary's cross, that's where you begin as you come as a sinner to Jesus.

Have you come to Jesus? The King has come and He has come for you.

Let us pray together. Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled.

The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. Today your gate is open and all who enter in shall find a father's welcome and pardon for their sin.

[ 48 : 49 ] The past shall be forgotten. A present joy be given. A future grace be promised. A glorious crown in heaven.

Amen.