

## REVIVAL NEWS

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# THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

*“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”* Mark 1:1.

In this verse we have five if not six important foundational words that together make an awesome proclamation concerning that which we most surely believe.

- The first word: the **beginning**,
- the second word: the **gospel**,
- the third word: **Jesus**,
- the fourth word: **Christ** [which is the translation of **Messiah**],
- the fifth phrase: the **Son of God**, made up of two words: **Son** and **God**

Teaching thoroughly from this verse will help all to understand the gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God more fully. To pursue this study, we recommend you go to the manual “The Glory of Messiah”, which is available on our website: [www.revivalministries.org.au](http://www.revivalministries.org.au)

In this newsletter we are looking at what is the beginning of the Gospel.

### What was the beginning of the gospel?

The first word that we need to understand is *“the beginning”*: what is the beginning of the gospel? How did the gospel begin? Jesus came at a certain time saying, *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel”* Mk.1:15. This is the first preaching of the gospel. What is the context or the background to Jesus appearing and beginning to preach? To answer this question, we are simply looking in the context of **Mark 1**, the first fifteen verses. In fact, the greater context of the ‘beginning of the gospel’ is in the Old Testament record and the words of the prophets. Paul tells us in **Romans 1** that *“the gospel of God was promised before through His prophets in the holy Scriptures”* (v1b-2).

Paul confirms this in **Galatians 3:8** *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’”*. God’s promises to Abraham were not just to his natural descendants through Isaac and Jacob, but rather to all the Gentiles who would come to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to say, *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed’, who is Christ”* (Gal.3:16). Then he says in verse 29, *“And if you are of Christ then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

The gospel was prophesied and promised to Abraham and to all who would be like Abraham, believing in Jesus the Messiah.

In **Mark 1:1-15**, there are five aspects of **the beginning of the gospel**:

- the prophetic Scriptures
- the preaching of John the Baptist
- the baptism of Jesus by John
- victory over the devil in the earth
- Jesus came preaching the gospel

## THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES

Mark quotes from both **Malachi** and **Isaiah** to introduce the origin of the gospel and specifically the part that John the Baptist played in fulfilling the Scriptures.

### Malachi 3:1

**Malachi 3:1a** *“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.”* Mark quotes it as *“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You”* (**Mark 1:2**). Malachi goes on to say, *“And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold He is coming, says YAHWEH of hosts”* (**Mal.3:1**).

The word ‘messenger’, used twice in the verse, is the Hebrew word *malach*, meaning ‘a messenger, ambassador, someone dispatched to do a task, or relay a message; specifically, an angel or heavenly messenger from the Lord’. The first ‘messenger’ in the verse is referring to John the Baptist, and that is what Mark quotes. The rest of the quote from Malachi speaks of the ‘Messenger’, and this Messenger is referring to Jesus the Messiah. YAHWEH says that He will send a messenger who will prepare the way for the *“Messenger of the covenant”*.

### Isaiah 40:3

Mark quotes the first part of this verse from Isaiah, *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD [YAHWEH]; make His paths straight”* (**Mark 1:3 NKJV**). This exact quote is repeated in **Matthew 3:3 & John 1:23**. Luke quotes a larger portion of the prophetic Scripture in **Luke 3:4-6**, quoting from **Isaiah 40:3-5**. It is very important to pay attention when God repeats something four times. The four gospel writers all gave priority to this prophetic Scripture from Isaiah.

In the four places that it is quoted, in the New King James Bible, the verses are quoted from the Old Testament and the name of God, LORD, is specifically mentioned in the four quotes. Who was John preparing the way for? The NKJV is faithful to bring the Old Testament quotes through into the New Testament, showing us an amazing revelation. John was preparing the way of the LORD [YAHWEH]. This is confirmed four times. John was not in the first instance preparing the way for Jesus; he was preparing the way for YAHWEH. In the context we understand that the prophetic Scriptures are speaking of John preparing the way for Jesus; but who is Jesus? Jesus is YAHWEH coming in the flesh (**1 Timothy 3:16**).

## THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

In chapter **1**, **Mark** quotes from the prophet Isaiah to introduce John the Baptist. The beginning of the gospel was with John, a child of Zacharias and Elizabeth [both Zacharias and

Elizabeth were of the family line of Aaron, **Luke 1:5**]. John came preaching a baptism of repentance for remission of sins. This is the beginning – a prophet coming who knows he is to introduce the One who was foretold. He would be coming literally in the wake of John; the One who was from the beginning (**Micah 5:2**). John was announcing the One who was coming. *“There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose”* **Mark1:7**.

John was anointed by God and his preaching was so impacting that all in the land of Judea came to hear Him. He came preaching and baptizing (**Mk.1:4-5**). John came in fulfillment of Scripture, foretelling the coming of the pre-existing One, the Eternal One; that the ‘I AM’ would come in the flesh. He was introducing the One who was from the beginning. *“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me’”* **Jn.1:15**.

### **THE BAPTISM OF JESUS BY JOHN**

The third aspect of the beginning of the gospel is the baptism of Jesus by John. *“It came to pass in those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan”* **Mk.1:9**.

**Matthew 3:13-15** speaks of Jesus coming to John for baptism. Jesus convinced John that it was God’s will for Him to be baptised. John had a revelation of who this One was (**Jn.1:33-34**). He had been given a sign to signify that One. This was the One that John had been preaching about. At Jesus’ baptism the heavens opened (**Lu.3:21**) and the Spirit of God came upon Him in fullness (**Matt.3:16-17, Mk.1:10**). Coming up from the waters of baptism, Jesus received the Spirit without measure and was affirmed as *“the Son”*. From that time Jesus was a different man walking and ministering as a son. There was a huge historical shift taking place at the baptism of Jesus: a sinless man was in the earth, and the heavens opened over His life, and *“the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him”* (**Lu.3:22**).

### **VICTORY OVER THE DEVIL IN THE EARTH**

The fourth aspect of the beginning of the gospel is victory over the devil. Immediately after His baptism Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil (**Mk.1:12-13**). Jesus was able to reverse the curse as he faced temptations in the realms of body, soul and spirit, even as Eve had faced similar temptations in the Garden; and Jesus overcame. Then angels came and ministered to Him (**Matt.4:11**).

Jesus as a man was able to overcome the devil in the earth. As a result of His victory, *“Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding regions”* **Lu.4:14**.

### **JESUS CAME PREACHING THE GOSPEL**

The fifth aspect of the beginning of the gospel is that Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God. The gospel is the gospel of the kingdom of God! There was a call to repent and believe the gospel.

In the preaching of the gospel in recent centuries the emphasis has been placed on ‘the end of the gospel’, that is, Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He died on the cross for our sins; if you believe that, you will be saved. However, in presenting the ‘finished message’ of the

victory of the cross, we have generally failed to share the gospel from the beginning. Properly trained disciples will understand the ‘beginning of the gospel’ and be able to lead people into *“the certainty of those things in which you were instructed”* by setting in order *“a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us”* (Lu.1:1-4). In this light, new believers will be properly founded in the basic principles of Christ and thereby fully prepared and able to grow to maturity (Heb.6:1-3).

## **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

### **The meaning of the word**

The Greek word for ‘gospel’ is *euaggelion* SC# 2098; it means a ‘good message’ and is translated ‘gospel’. It is translated: gospel {46 times}, gospel of Christ {11 times}, gospel of God {7 times}, gospel of the kingdom {3 times}.

The verb SC #2097 *euaggelize* means to announce good news, evangelise, especially the gospel. It is translated: preach [the gospel, the good news] {23 times}, preach the gospel {22 times}.

### **The manifold nature of the gospel**

It is helpful in understanding the gospel to simply do a Concordance study of all the references to the Gospel. It is amazing to find all the different descriptions of the Gospel.

In **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, Paul gives us the summary message of what is the gospel. He said it is *“the gospel which I preached”* (v.1). In **verse 3** Paul says concerning the gospel *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received”*. Paul received the gospel by revelation. The Gospel can only be received by revelation. Then Paul summarises the gospel: *“that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Cor.15:3b-4).

### **The gospel in the Scriptures:**

The **beginning of the gospel** (Mk.1:1, Phil.4:15)

The gospel is the **gospel of the kingdom** (Matt.4:23); it is a **gospel of peace** (Rom.10:15)

It is the **gospel of Jesus Christ** (Mk.1:1); it is the **gospel of God** (1Thes.2:9, Rom.1:1);

The **gospel of Messiah** [Christ] (Rom.1:16)

It is the **gospel of His Son** (Rom.1:9); it is the **gospel of the glory of Christ** (2Cor.4:4)

It is the **glorious gospel of the blessed God** (1Tim.1:11)

The gospel is **to be preached to every creature** (Mk.16:15);

To be **preached to the poor** (Matt.11:5, Lu.4:18), **to be preached in the temple** (Lu.20:1)

The gospel is to be preached **in the towns** (Lu.9:6), **in villages** (Acts 8:25) **to the city** (Acts14:21), **in the regions** (2Cor.10:16)

God preached the **gospel to Abraham** beforehand (Gal.3:8);

Preach the **gospel by the Holy Spirit** (1Pet.1:12)

We are to preach the gospel **free of charge** (1Cor.9:18, 2Cor.11:7);  
Those who preach the gospel **should live from the gospel** (1Cor.9:14),  
We are **entrusted with** the gospel (1Cor.9:17)  
We are to **believe the gospel** (Mk.1:15); we are **called by** the gospel (2Thes.2:14);  
We are to **obey the gospel** (Rom.10:16, 1Pet.4:17)  
The **truth of the gospel** is to continue with us (Col.1:5, Gal.2:5);  
We are to **know the mystery** of the gospel (Eph.6:19)  
The gospel is **veiled** to those who are perishing (2Cor.4:3)  
We are to testify to **the gospel of the grace of God** (Acts20:24);  
We are to **minister the gospel** (Col.1:23)  
The **fullness of the blessing** of the gospel (Rom.15:29)  
Striving together **for the faith** of the gospel (Phil.1:27)  
Serving **with my spirit** in the gospel (Rom.1:9)  
Serving **as a son with me** in the gospel (Phil.2:22)  
We are to **labour together** in the gospel (Phil.4:3, 1Thes.3:2)  
We are to **share in sufferings** for the Gospel (2Tim.1:8)  
The gospel is **the power of God unto salvation** (Rom.1:16)  
It is the gospel **of your salvation** (Eph.1:13)  
We are **begotten through the gospel** to be children of God (1Cor.4:15)  
There is a **fellowship in the gospel** (Phil.1:5)  
Do not move away from **the hope** of the gospel (Col.1:23)  
The gospel **for the uncircumcised** and the gospel **for the circumcised** (Gal.2:7)  
There is **no other gospel** (2Cor.11:4, Gal.1:6)  
Do not **pervert the gospel** of Christ (Gal.1:7)  
**Woe is me** if I do not **preach the gospel** (1Cor.9:16)  
We are called to **defend and confirm** the gospel, even in chains (Phil.1:7,17)  
**Life and immortality** have been **brought to light** through the gospel (2Tim.1:10)  
**Jesus Christ was raised from the dead** according to the gospel (2Tim.2:8)  
Preach to every nation, tribe, tongue and people the **everlasting gospel** (Rev.14:6)

### **This gospel must be preached**

This preaching began with John preaching in the wilderness 2000 years ago, introducing Jesus the Messiah. This was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Jesus commanded the apostles to **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”** Mk.16:15. The very word ‘preach’ means ‘preach the gospel’. Preaching is the proclamation or announcement that Jesus is the Messiah; Jesus is the Lord. When we believe

such preaching, everything changes. Our life is saved, delivered and we are set free to live in the kingdom of God by the Spirit.

We are called ***“to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ [Messiah] to the Gentiles”*** (Eph.3:8). Paul was the apostle specifically called to the Gentiles (Gal.2:8). Paul was ***“a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee”*** (Phil.3:6). He had the rich heritage of Judaism, as do Jews to this day. It is through their Judaistic heritage that Jews understand the **Messiah**, the Christ, whereas Gentiles have no heritage in Messiah. Gentile believers need to understand and apprehend the **unsearchable riches** of Christ [that is Messiah]!

### **The good tidings**

The ‘gospel’ originally referred to ‘a reward for good tidings’, but later came to mean the good news itself. In the Roman Empire this word referred to the ‘good news’ of another military victory – the news sent back to Rome via a messenger that there had been a victory in battle! Historically the ‘gospel’ in the Roman Empire also referred to the good news of a new Emperor ascending the throne.

Both of these historical references help us understand the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- He has won a great victory, ***“For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”*** (1Jn.3:8b; Col.2:14-15);
- He has ascended the throne of David (Acts 2:30,33); ***“For He must reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet”*** 1Cor.15:25.

### **Jesus triumphed over His enemies**

The gospel is the good news or the message of what Jesus the Messiah has accomplished through His death and resurrection. ***“He made a public spectacle of the principalities and powers, having disarmed them and triumphing over them in the cross”*** Col.2:15. The reference behind this verse is to a victorious general or the Emperor himself, returning to Rome for a victory procession [public spectacle] wherein the conqueror and his troops paraded through the streets, and prisoners who had been conquered in the battle were led naked and chained. This is the extent of the victory of Jesus the Messiah over the enemy. Jesus brought total victory over sin, hell, death and the devil. Jesus disarmed the principalities and powers and made an open spectacle of them. He exposed the enemy’s defeat through the cross. **This is the gospel!**

### **The reward is the kingdom**

Remember the gospel originally meant ‘a reward for good tidings’. There is a reward in receiving the good news to those who receive it. There is a benefit for the hearers. If the news is received there is a reward. Men and women will come to Christ, He is the reward. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom brings salvation; it includes bringing the good news of salvation. The gospel is an eternal gospel with eternal rewards. By believing the gospel we enter the kingdom of God. ***“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins”*** Col.1:13-14.

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