

WHO DO YOU SAY HE IS?



Who Do You Say He Is?
Mark 1:1

We can trust Mark's account (and the other Gospels) to tell us who Jesus is.

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1)

What are the Gospels?

- "The Gospels thus are undoubtedly polished products of much effort, carefully arranged to communicate their points most adequately" (Craig Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 74).
- What do the Gospels communicate?
 - The Gospels communicate the life of Jesus, especially his ministry and passion.
 - "While the Evangelists clearly had an important theological agenda, the very fact that they chose to adapt Greco-Roman biographical conventions to tell the story of Jesus indicates that they were centrally concerned to communicate what they thought really happened" (David Aune, "Biography," 125).
 - "It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3).
 - The Gospels are ancient biographies of Jesus.
- How is ancient biography different from modern biography?
 - Ancient biographies often begin in adulthood
 - Ancient biographies do not follow a chronological sequence of events and feel free to rearrange material topically.
 - Ancient biographers were often less embarrassed by their biases.

Why should we trust the Gospels?

- We can trust the Gospels because they are based on eyewitness testimony of Jesus.
 - “Historically speaking, testimony is a unique and uniquely valuable means of access to historical reality. . . . Testimony is the category that enables us to read the Gospels in a properly historical way and a properly theological way. It is where history and theology meet” (Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 5–6).
 - “The Gospels were written within living memory of the events they recount” (Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 7).
- What about other “gospels?”
 - Why aren’t the other “gospels” included in the New Testament?
 - Written several decades after the canonical Gospels, in the second century.
 - Do not align with the teaching of the canonical Gospels.
 - Weren’t based on eyewitness testimonies.
 - The church felt that through the canonical Gospels they “encountered the real Jesus and divine power”
 - “Second-century Christian leaders would have said that neither individuals nor churches had the authority to ‘choose’ which of the many Gospels they liked, but to receive the ones given by God and handed down by Christ through his apostles” (C. E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels*, 246).
- Who was the eyewitness of Mark’s Gospel?
 - John Mark (Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:12–13)
 - “13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son” (1 Peter 5:12–13).
 - The Gospel of Mark is based on Peter’s eyewitness testimony
 - “The first disciple named in Mark’s Gospel, immediately following the outset of Jesus’ ministry is Peter. . . . Peter is named again right at the end of the Gospel, when the women at the my tomb are told to tell Jesus’ ‘disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee: there you will see him’ (16:7).” Bauckham argues “the two references from an inclusio around the whole story, suggesting that Peter is the witness whose testimony includes the whole” (Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 124–125).

Why did Mark write his Gospel?

- “Mark’s account of Jesus’s life is presented to us in two symmetrical acts: his *identity* as King over all things (in Mark chapters 1–8), and his *purpose* in dying on the cross (in Mark chapters 9–16)” (Timothy Keller, *Jesus the King*, xix).
- “27 And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ 28 And they told him, ‘John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.’ 29 And he asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’”(Mark 8:27–29a).
- “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—

or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to" (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 52).

- Mark wants to persuade us that Jesus is the "Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1)

Who do you say Jesus is?

"Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ'" (Mark 8:29b).