

# MARK

## **1:1**            **What does the word “gospel” mean?**

*Gospel* means glad tidings, or good news. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that God in Christ has made a way of salvation that is open to all mankind. To believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ means salvation, to reject it means damnation (CP Mk 16:15-16; Jn 3:16-18, 36). The gospel of Christ reveals the righteousness of God (CP Ro 1:16-17). But for anyone to believe, the gospel must be preached (CP Ro 10:11-17; 1Cor 1:18-21). The gospel is a sacred trust which God has assigned to every Christian the responsibility to preach (CP Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; 2Cor 5:18-19). John the Baptist was the bearer of the first good news of Christ – his preaching was the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ (CP Mk 1:1-8 with Mt 3:1-3; 11:7-15; Lu 16:16). *Gospel* is from the same Greek word, **euangelion**, from which the word *Evangelist* – one who preaches the good news – is derived.

**1:4-5**            *See comments on Mt 3:1-6*

**1:6-8**            *See comments on Mt 3:11.*

**1:9**                *See comments on Mt 3:13-15.*

**1:9-11**          *See comments on Mt 3:16-17.*

**1:40-41**        **What significant fact does this scripture teach?**

This scripture teaches that it is always God’s will to heal His children. Sadly though, many Christians do not believe this. They do not doubt God’s ability to heal, but they doubt His willingness. The reason Jesus healed this man is because it is God’s will. Jesus only did that which God told Him to do and which pleased God (CP Jn 5:19-20; 8:28-29). We should never doubt God’s willingness to heal us. Right throughout scripture He promises to heal His children as well as forgive their sins (CP Ex 15:26; 23:25-26; De 7:11-15; 28:1-14; Josh 1:8; Psa 1:1-3; Psa 91:1-10; 103:1-5; 107:20). In the Old Testament God Himself was the healer – *Jehovah Rapha*, the Lord that heals, - and in the New Testament God has provided for our healing through the shed blood of Jesus (CP Isa 53:4-5 with Mt 8:16-17; 9:1-8; Mk 16:17-18; Lu 4:16-21; Ro 5:17; 2Cor 1:19-20; Ga 3:13-14, 26-29; Jas 5:14-16; 1Pe 2:24; 3Jn 2). 2Cor 1:19-20 teaches us that all of God’s promises right throughout scripture are still valid for believers today, because as we learn from Ga 3:26-29, those that are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to God’s promise. Every promise of God is yes to those who belong to Jesus – there is not one promise of God that is no to the believer who will believe God for the promises and meet the conditions. (See also comments on Mt 8:16-17.)

**1:43-44**        *See comments on Mt 8:1-4.*

**2:1-12**         *See comments on Mt 9:1-8.*

**2:13-14**       **Who is Levi?**

Levi was a publican – a tax collector. He became Matthew, one the twelve apostles and author of the gospel that bears his name. Apart from being named

in the lists of the apostles, no further record of Matthew is found in the New Testament (CP Mt 9:9; 10:1-4; Lu 5:27-28). Because Matthew was called the son of Alphaeus in Mk 2:14, some in the church believe that he and James, another of the twelve apostles, who is also called the son of Alphaeus, were brothers (CP Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lu 6:15; Ac 1:13). See also comments on Mt 10:1-4.

**2:18-20**        *See comments on Mt 9:14-15.*

**2:21-22**        *See comments on Mt 9:16-17.*

**2:23-28**        *See comments on Mt 12:1-8.*

**3:14-19**        *See comments on Mt 10:1-4.*

**3:20-21**        **Who are the friends of Jesus referred to here?**

These friends are members of Jesus’ family – His mother, Mary, and His half-brothers. This is confirmed for us in V31-32 (CP V31-32). *Friends* is derived from the Greek phrase **hoi par autou**, which means *those from the side of him* – clearly indicating family members (CP also Lu 8:19-21). See also comments on Mt 1:18-21, 12:46-47, Jn 19:25-27.

**3:22-27**        *See comments on Mt 12:25.*

**3:28-29**        *See comments on Mt 12:31-32.*

**3:31-35**        **What does Jesus mean by what He says here?**

Jesus means that those who hear God’s word and do it are just as important to Him as His own immediate family (CP Mt 12:46-50; Lu 8:19-21; 11:27-28). Jesus is not disowning His family, but simply stating that spiritual kinship with Him goes beyond physical relationships. Faith without obedience does not exist in the spiritual family of God (CP Mt 7:21-27; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:22-25).

**4:1-8**            *See comments on Mt 13:3-9.*

**4:13**            **What does Jesus mean by what he says here?**

To better understand what Jesus means here we need to study the context in which He said it (CP V1-9). This is called the parable of the sower. It concerns the nature and development of the kingdom of heaven in its present earthly aspect. Jesus gave this parable as a type of all the rest of His parables. His questions to the disciples in V13 implies that if one can understand this parable one can understand all the others, for in this parable are the principles of interpretation in all of them (CP V14-20). See also comments on Mt 13:3-9.

**4:21-25**        **What truth is Jesus teaching here?**

This is called the parable of the lighted candle. Jesus admonishes us here to put into practice what we hear. It is not to be hidden, but used in the service of God. Knowing that the gospel saves is not something believers can keep to themselves – it has to be shared

with those who are not saved (CP Mt 5:14-16; Lu 8:16-17). We have not been given the light of divine truth to hide it from others – it must be shared with them. What we do with the truth we receive will determine whether or not we will be given more, or lose that which we already have (CP Mt 25:29; Mk 4:24-25; Lu 8:16-18, 11:33-36). This is a stern warning to believers to not only be hearers of God’s word, but doers also. Whoever does this will be given more light, while those who do not will lose even what little they have. (See also comments on Mt 5:13-16, 13:12; 25:14-30; 28:19-20(A) and Lu 11:33-36.)

**4:26-29**      *What is Jesus likening the kingdom of God to here?*

This is called the parable of the seed sown into the ground. Jesus told this parable immediately after admonishing believers to heed what they hear, and warning them that rejecting any truth would result in them losing what they already had. Jesus used this parable to illustrate the truth that as surely as seed sown in good soil will germinate and grow to produce fruit of itself for harvest in due course naturally, outside of any human agency, so the manifestation of the kingdom of God will follow in due course the faithful ministry of God’s word. Once the word is sown in the hearts of men the fruit it produces will be the result of the word itself, not the human agent who sowed it. God’s word has the power within itself for its own fulfillment (CP Nu 23:19; Isa 55:10-11; Col 1:1-6; He 4:12-13; 1Pe 1:23-25).

**4:30-32**      *See comments on Mt 13:31-32.*

**4:35-39**      *Is this the same storm as in Mt 8:24?*

No (CP Mt 8:23-27). The tempest that arose in the sea here is an underwater earthquake. It is not the same as the great storm and wind in Mk 4 and Lu 8. The word *tempest* in Mt 8 is from the Greek word **seismos**, which means *earthquake*, and is translated as such everywhere else in scripture (CP Mt 24:7; 27:54; 28:2; Mk 13:8; Lu 21:11; Ac 16:26; Rev 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18). *Storm* in Mk 4 and Lu 8 is from the Greek word **lailaps** which describes heavy rain accompanied by high winds; squalls (CP Lu 8:22-25; 2Pe 2:17).

**5:1-20**      *See comments on Mt 8:28-34.*

**5:22-23**      *See comments on Mt 9:18-19, 23-24.*

**5:43**      *See comments on Mt 8:1-4.*

**6:2-3**      *See comments on Mt 12:46-47.*

**6:4-6**      *See comments on Mt 13:53-58.*

**6:7**      *Why did Jesus send the disciples out two by two?*

It was done for legal and practical reasons. In the divine order every word is established in the mouth of two or three witnesses (CP Nu 35:30; De 17:6; 19:15; Mt 18:15-16; Jn 8:16-18; 2Cor 13:1; He 10:28 with Ac 13:1-2; 15:27, 32, 37-40; 19:22). Jesus also sent

out other disciples two by two in scripture (CP Mk 14:13; Lu 10:1). Scriptures also teach that two are better than one in many other respects as well. When one falls the other can lift him up; when one is discouraged the other can encourage him; when one is weak the other can strengthen him; when one is prevailed against the other can stand with him (CP Pr 27:17; Eccl 4:9-12; Ro 15:14). Two can also prevail with God in unified prayer (CP Mt 18:19-20). There are many other passages in scripture dealing with the two by two principle (CP Lu 7:19; Jn 1:35-41; Ac 9:38; 10:7; 15:36-41; 19:22; 1Ti 5:19; Rev 11:3-6, 10-12).

**6:7-12**      *See comments on Mt 10:9-14.*

**6:34-44**      *See comments on Mt 14:13-21.*

**6:52**      *What does Mark mean by what he says here about the disciples?*

What this passage teaches is that when the disciples saw the figure walking on the water toward them they should have reasoned upon the basis of the miracle Jesus performed that same day with the loaves and fishes, that it was He and not an apparition walking on the water (CP V35-52). The disciples should have reasoned that if Jesus had the supernatural power to feed over 5000 people from just five loaves and two fishes – and still have twelve baskets of food left over – then He could also exert that supernatural power to walk on water, quieten the wind, and still the sea. But because the disciples had not understood the significance of the miracle of the loaves and fishes as pointing to the true identity of Jesus, they had allowed their hearts to become dull and lose their power of understanding in the hours that had elapsed since that miracle, and when they saw the figure walking on the water they did not even bother to reason that it was Jesus. The same thing happened to them after Jesus fed the 4000 in Mk 8. Again, because they did not grasp the significance of this miracle, their hearts were dull and devoid of understanding (CP Mk 8:1-9 with V14-21). These teachings are also recorded in Mt 15:29-38 and 16:6-12. *Heart* here refers to the entire inner man, his reason, affection and will. (See also comments on Mt 14:13-21 and 16:5-12).

**7:9-13**      *See comments on Mt 15:1-9.*

**7:24-30**      *See comments on Mt 15:21-28.*

**8:1-9**      *See comments on Mt 14:13-21.*

**8:14-21**      *See comments on Mt 16:5-12.*

**8:22-26**      *What was Jesus’ purpose in taking the blind man outside the town, and why did He spit on his eyes?*

Scriptures do not record the answer to either of these questions, thus anything ventured here would be pure speculation. This is the only record in scripture of Jesus healing someone in two stages, and it should encourage us to persevere the same as He did if complete healing does not manifest immediately in whomever we are believing it for. When complete

healing did not manifest in the blind man immediately, Jesus kept challenging him until it did. Where it says in V23 that Jesus asked the man if he saw anything, this means in the literal English rendering of the Greek that Jesus *kept asking* the man, “Do you, possibly, see anything?” When the man said that he saw men as trees walking around, Jesus laid His hands on him again and made him look up until his sight was completely restored, and he could see clearly. The way Jesus continued with the healing process until the man was completely healed is recorded here for our example, and we must be prepared to persevere likewise.

- 8:27-30      *See comments on Mt 16:13-18.*
- 8:31-33      *See comments on Mt 16:21-23.*
- 8:34-38      *See comments on Mt 10:37-38 and 10:39.*
- 9:1            *See comments on Mt 16:28.*
- 9:2-8        *See comments on Mt 17:1-9.*
- 9:9-10       *Why did the disciples not understand what Jesus meant when He talked about being risen from the dead?*

Like many in the church still today, the disciples then also did not take what Jesus had to say literally. That is why they could not understand what Jesus meant when He talked about being risen from the dead, even though He had already told them in plain language - and as a consequence had to rebuke Peter in Mk 8 - that He had to suffer and die and be resurrected the third day (CP 8:31-33). Jesus even repeated this again in Mk 9, yet again the disciples could not understand it, and were too afraid to ask Him (CP 9:30-32). The disciples really did not take what Jesus told them about His death, burial and resurrection literally until after He was literally resurrected (CP Jn 2:22 with Psa 16:10). See comments on Mt 16:21-23, Jn 20:9.

- 9:13            *What does Jesus mean that Elijah has indeed come?*

(CP V11-13) Jesus refers to John the Baptist here as representing Elijah, not in person, but in spirit and in power (CP Mt 11:14, 17:10-13, Lu 1:13-17). Elijah himself will come as one of God’s two witnesses in the middle of the tribulation, prior to the second coming of Christ (CP Mal 4:5-6; Rev 11:3-12). See also comments on Rev 11:3-6.

- 9:28-29      *See comments on Mt 17:21.*
- 9:33-34      *See comments on Mt 20:20-28.*
- 9:35-37      *See comments on Mt 18:3.*
- 9:38-41      *What lesson do we learn from what Jesus says here?*

This is a lesson for divided Christendom today. Jesus is rebuking sectarianism here, which Moses also had to do in the Old Testament (CP Nu 11:26-29). There

is no place for narrow exclusivism among God’s children in any age. Everyone who works for God’s glory are God’s children, and our brothers and sisters in Christ (CP Ac 10:13-15, 34-35). This does not mean that we have to compromise our biblical beliefs or doctrines to accommodate them, but we are to love and honour them in spite of our differences (CP Ro 12:10; Php 2:1-4). Everyone who performs even the smallest act of hospitality in Jesus’ name will certainly be recompensed by becoming a part of God’s eternal kingdom (CP Mk 9:41). They are not recompensed on the basis of their good deed, but because it originated in faith (CP Josh 2:1-24; 6:16-25; He 11:30-31; Jas 2:25-26).

- 9:42            *See comments on Mt 18:6.*
- 9:43-48      *See comments on Mt 5:29.*
- 9:49-50      *See comments on Mt Mt 5:13-16.*
- 10:2-12      *See comments on Mt 5:31-32.*
- 10:13-16     *See comments on Mt 19:13-15.*
- 10:17-22     *See comments on Mt 19:16-22.*
- 10:23-27     *See comments on Mt 19:23-26.*
- 10:28-31     *See comments on Mt 19:30.*
- 10:32-34     *Why were the disciples amazed, and the others who followed Jesus here, afraid?*

The disciples were amazed, and the others following – the accompanying crowd – were afraid. Scriptures do not tell us why, but Jesus obviously walked in advance of the disciples with a solemnity and determination which foreboded danger, and His manner struck awe in the minds of the disciples. It bewildered, perplexed, astonished them. The meaning of what Jesus had previously told them about how He must suffer and die and be raised up again on the third day, was only just becoming apparent to them, whereas previously, they understood none of it (CP Mt 16:21-23 (also Mk 8:31-33); Mk 9:9-10, 31-32; Lu 9:21-22, 44-45; Lu 18:31-34). Jesus explains it again to them on the way to Jerusalem, only this time He goes into more detail (CP Mk 10:33-34). See also comments on Mt 16:21-23.

- 10:35-45     *See comments on Mt 20:20-28.*
- 10:46-52     *Apart from having his eyesight restored what other significant feature is revealed about Bartimaeus here?*

Bartimaeus would let nothing hinder him or dampen his faith in Jesus to heal him. The more he was rebuked by the crowd for calling out to Jesus, the more he called out (CP V48). He had absolute faith in Jesus to heal him. In the Greek construction of V47-50, it teaches that he called on Jesus to heal him *at once*, and that when Jesus called him, he *threw* off his outer garment and *leapt* to his feet to get to Jesus.

He intended that nothing would stop him from responding to Jesus' call. He was immediately healed and he then "followed Jesus in the way" – he became His disciple. *Followed* in this context means to accompany, especially as a disciple.

**11:9-10** See comments on Mt 21:9.

**11:12-14** See comments on Mt 21:17-22.

**11:20-24** See comments on Mt 21:17-22.

**11:25-26** See comments on Mt 18:23-35.

**11:27-33** *What was the purpose behind Jesus' questioning of the Pharisees concerning John's authority to baptize?*

Jesus answered the Pharisees' question here with a question, plainly implying that He got His authority to act as He did in cleansing out the temple of the animals and birds and moneychangers, etc, in V15-18, from the same source as John got his authority to baptize (CP Lu 1:11-17). Jesus was forcing the Pharisees to publicly evaluate both His and John's ministries. If they acknowledged John's authority as being from God, then they would have to acknowledge that Jesus' authority was from God also, because John had publicly testified to the divine source of Jesus' mission (CP Jn 1:29-34). The Pharisees knew full well the right answer, but they were willing to lie to extricate themselves from their own trap.

**12:1-9** See comments on Mt 21:33-41.

**12:10-11** See comments on Mt 21:42-44.

**12:18-27** See comments on Mt 22:23-30.

**12:28-31** See comments on Jn 13:34-35.

**12:35-37** See comments on Mt 22:41-45.

**13:1-37** See comments on Mt 24:1-3; Mt 24:34 and Mt 25:1-13.

**14:3-9** See comments on Mt 26:6-13.

**14:10-11** See comments on Mt 26:14-16.

**14:12-17** See comments on Mt 26:17-19.

**14:25** See comments on Mt 26:29.

**14:32-42** See comments on Mt 26:36-44.

**14:51-52** *Who is the young man referred to here?*

Apart from being mentioned here there is no other record of this young man in scripture. Some Christians think that Mark is referring to himself here. Others say it was Lazarus, who Christ raised up from the dead. Still others think that it was the rich young ruler, (who could not give up his

possessions for Christ). As scriptures are silent, all speculation as to his identity is futile.

**14:58** See comments on Mt 26:61.

**15:1-15** See comments on Mt 27:24-25.

**15:34** See comments on Mt 27:45-46.

**15:38** See comments on Mt 27:51.

**15:42** See comments on Mt 27:50.

**16:1** *What Sabbath is referred to here?*

This is the normal weekly – Saturday – Sabbath referred to here which commenced at 6pm Friday and ended at 6pm Saturday. Night precedes day in God's order (CP Gen 1:3-5; Lev 23:32). Jesus rose up sometime during Saturday night after the Sabbath had ended for He was gone from the grave before the women got there by sunrise on Sunday (CP Mt 28:1-7; Mk 16:1-9; Lu 24:1-7; Jn 20:1-10). This clearly refutes the teaching in the church that Jesus died and was buried on the Friday – "Good Friday" – as it is known throughout Christendom, because if that were so then Jesus only spent a little over twenty-four hours – a day and a night – in the "heart of the earth" before being raised up. Yet He Himself said that He would be there three days and three nights (CP Jonah 1:17 with Mt 12:40; 27:63; Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; 1Cor 15:3-4).

It is plainly evident from these scriptures that Jesus could not have died and been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth as He said He would if He was buried on so-called "Good Friday". To spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth before being raised up again means that Jesus was buried on the preceding Wednesday, which is what scriptures teach (CP Jn 19:31-32, 38-42). The "high day" Sabbath that was to take place on the next day – Thursday – after Jesus' burial was a special Sabbath: a day of great, solemn celebration, such as the day of the great feast when Jesus invited all who were thirsty to come to Him and drink (CP Jn 7:37). The high day Sabbath was completely different to the normal weekly – Saturday – Sabbath (See also comments on Mt 27:50, Ac 12:4, Ga 4:9).

**16:7** *Was Peter singled out specially here as leader of the disciples to be told about Jesus?*

Peter was not singled out specially here as leader of the disciples to be told about Jesus, but to be reassured that he was forgiven and still included among the disciples despite his denials of Christ. All that Peter did was predicted by Jesus, so now his re-conversion must also be fulfilled (CP Lu 22:31-34 with Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14: 27-31; Jn 13:36-38). Peter had no preeminence over the other disciples (see also comments on Mt 16:19).

**16:9-20** *Should these verses be considered inspired or have they been added to Mark's text later, and are not valid teaching, as some claim?*

These verses are just as genuine as the rest of the New Testament scripture. By all accounts they have only been omitted from two of the oldest Greek manuscripts but are included in all the others. It is ludicrous to question their authenticity or authorship when they conform to the rest of New Testament teaching. *V9-11* are confirmed by Mt 28:1-10 and Lu 24:10-11 (CP V9-11 with Mt 28:1-10; Lu 24:10-11); *V12-14* are confirmed by Mt 28:16-17; Lu 24:13-43 and Jn 20:21-23 (CP V12-14 with Mt 28:16-17; Lu 24:13-43 and Jn 20:21-23); *V15-16* are confirmed by Mt 28:18-20; Lu 24:44-48, and Jn 20:21 (CP V15-16 with Mt 28:18-20; Lu 24:44-48; Jn 20:21); *V19-20* are confirmed by Lu 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-11, 5:12 and Eph 4:7-10 (CP V19-20 with Lu 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-11, 5:12; Eph 4:7-10). Everything that Mk 16:9-20 teaches is taught as the inspired word of God everywhere else in scripture. Thus V9-20 must also be considered inspired.

**16:9-13**      *Why did the disciples not believe that Jesus had risen from the grave even though He told them He would, and there were witnesses to it?*

Because they had hardened their hearts to the truth of it. Some still doubted even when Jesus was in their very midst (CP Mt 28:16-17; Lu 24:36-46; Jn 20:19-20, 24-29). Scriptures do not say that Jesus rebuked all the disciples for their unbelief and hardness of heart but He did rebuke the eleven that were closest to Him (CP Mk 16:9-13; Lu 24:10-11 with Mk 16:14). The disciples never really took what Jesus told them about the resurrection literally until He was literally resurrected (CP Jn 2:22 with Psa 16:10). In Jn 20:29 Jesus pronounced a blessing on all who would come to faith without the help of a visible, bodily manifestation to them (CP Jn 20:29). This blessing comes to all who believe on the basis of the proclaimed gospel and the scriptural evidences for its validity (CP 1Pe 1:3-9). Believers today are not deprived by not seeing Jesus physically; instead they are the recipients of His special blessing "...blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed". (See also comments on Mk 9:9-10.)

**16:16**      *Does what Jesus says here mean that one must be baptized in order to be saved?*

Jesus is not teaching here that baptism saves, since He goes on to say that those who do not believe will be condemned – they will be condemned for not believing, not for not being baptized. Conversely, those who believe and are baptized will be saved because they believe, not because they are baptized –

their baptism is merely the picture of their new life in Christ, not the means of securing it (CP 1Pe 3:18-21). See also comments on Mt 28:19-20.

**16:17-18**      *Are the signs Jesus refers to here valid for today or were they only for the first century church, as many believe?*

Signs are the outworking in believers of the baptism in the Holy Spirit – which Jesus promises to everyone who will believe on Him (CP Mt 3:11; Lu 11:11-13; Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:36-39; Ga 3:13-14, 26-29). *All that are afar off* in Ac 2:39 includes us today, and all who will come to Christ in the future (CP Ac 5:32). *All who obey God* refers to every believer in every age from Pentecost onwards (CP Mt 28:20). Jesus qualifies the life-span of His commands to the church here by adding "...and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." That means that Christ was not only speaking to His disciples of that era, but to His disciples throughout the whole of the church age. What applied then applies for today too. This clearly refutes any teaching that the signs of Mk 16:17 were only for the first century church. Signs were not limited to the first century church any more than the Lord's command to preach the gospel and baptize repentant sinners was (CP Mk 16:15-16; 2Cor 5:18-20). Signs are the evidence to a lost world that Jesus is alive - He confirms the ministries of all who do the work of God with signs following (CP Mk 16:20; Ac 5:12). Signs are a demonstration of the spirit and of power that awakens unbelievers to a consciousness of the presence and the power of God, which raises their faith in Jesus, and they get saved (CP Jn 20:30-31; Ac 2:41-47; 3:1-4:4; 5:12-14; 8:6-7; Ro 15:18-21; 1Cor 14:22).

Signs include speaking in tongues, prophecy, healings, miracles – the dead being raised up to life, etc, demons being cast out, exercising authority over the elements, walking on water, restoring sight to the blind – anything that Jesus did He said believers could do also (CP Jn 14:12). This also is a promise to every believer in every age, including believers today. It is clearly inconsistent with scripture to teach that God only empowered the first century church for service and that the same empowering is not for today. If the contemporary church is also to fulfill Christ's command to disciple all nations, then it has to have the same empowering which the first century church had, and to teach otherwise is wrong. All we have to do is believe God's word and act on it, and God will soon confirm that word with signs following. (See also comments on Jn 14:12-14.)