

“So, You’re a King?”

by Travis Dean

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Today we begin a new journey. It will take us through the book of Mark. The reason we are taking this journey, is because (1) it is a biography of Jesus Christ, the only One who has shown us what a healthy and dangerous Christian looks like; (2) watching and listening to Him has proven to result in becoming just like Him. And that’s the vision I believe God has for our church – that we might be like Christ. We learned last week a little bit about the author of this book. His name is John Mark. He is not as well-known as the authors of the other three gospels. He was not one of the 12 disciples, and he was not a prominent leader in the early Christian church, like Paul, Luke, or Timothy. And yet he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a biography of our Lord.

So, let’s begin our journey by reading **Mark 1:1**. Mark begins his biography with a statement filled with meaning. The first five words of this statement are “The beginning of the gospel”. Mark uses this word translated, “beginning”, in two other places in his biography. In both places “the beginning” refers to when God created the world. Genesis 1:1 begins similarly to Mark’s account. Let’s recite it together. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” I believe Mark begins his biography with the words “the beginning” to call our attention to the gospel as it relates to the creation of the world. **(1)** Just like the creation of the world is an event in history, so the gospel of Jesus Christ is an event in history. The creation of the world took six days. The gospel of Jesus Christ took 3 ½ years. There is a definite time when it began, and a definite time when it ended. **(2)** Just like the creation of the world was a joint effort between God, His Son, and His Spirit (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 1:2), so the gospel involves these three as well (Mark 1:9-11). And **(3)** just like the creation of the world revealed God’s creative power to speak things into existence, so the gospel reveals His power to create goodness where there was none (2 Cor. 5:17).

Mark reveals the subject of his biography in his opening statement as well. It is Jesus Christ. This constitutes His name as well as His title. The name, “**Jesus**” was not an uncommon one in Bible times. The Bible mentions other people whose names were Jesus (Acts 13:6; Col. 4:11). This name is equivalent to “Joshua” in the Old Testament. It means, “The Lord is salvation” or “salvation is from the Lord”. As the angel told Mary, this is a very appropriate name for our Lord, who came to save us from our sins (Matt. 1:21).

Mark attaches the title, “**Christ**”, after the name, “Jesus”. It is equivalent to the word, “Messiah” and means “anointed” or “anointed one”. It was a very common practice in Bible times for a king to be anointed. The Bible records the prophet Samuel anointing Saul as Israel’s first king (1 Sam. 10:1; 24:6) and David as Saul’s replacement (1 Sam. 16:1, 13; 2 Sam. 5:3). So, for Mark to refer to Jesus as “the Christ” is to reveal His role as a King. We will see this more clearly in a minute.

Let’s now read **Mark 1:2, 3**. Mark now substantiates his claim that Jesus is the Christ (or Messiah) by quoting from the prophets in the Old Testament. His quotation in verse 2 is from Malachi 3:1. His quote in verse 3 is from Isaiah 40:3. The common idea in both quotations is that God would send someone to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. It was understood by the Jews that these were prophecies of the Messiah, the Christ. The language being used here draws upon an Oriental custom. When a king would intend to visit parts of his territory, he would send messengers to each district he planned to visit. They would announce his approaching visit, and summon the residents to prepare for the king’s arrival. The locals were expected to **repair the roads** that the king would be traveling on, since little was ever done to maintain them in those days. So, Mark’s use of these Old Testament prophecies is another indication that the subject of his biography, Jesus Christ, is a King.

I would like to consider with you **two ideas** concerning **Jesus Christ as a King**. As we begin, turn with me to **Luke 17**. We will read **verses 20 and 21**. The Jews were looking for the Messiah to free them from being ruled by the Roman Empire. But Jesus says that the kingdom He has come to establish is not one that can be seen. It's not in a particular geographical location. His kingdom is established in the hearts of men and women. The size of His kingdom depends on the number of people who allow Him to rule in their lives. So, as a king, Jesus Christ came to **rule in our hearts**.

Turn with me now to **John 18:36-37**. The Jews have brought Jesus to be tried by Pilate. They are hoping that he will sentence Jesus to death. Instead, **Pilate calls for Jesus** to be brought to him. They have a short discourse, and we will pick it up in verse 36. Pilate has asked Jesus if He is the King of the Jews. Jesus replies by telling him about His kingdom. First, He says, "My kingdom does not consist of a geographical territory. It does not have a physical location." **Second**, He says, "My kingdom is not extended by force. That's why we have not begun a fight or riot." Pilate is impressed. His response is, "So, You're a King?" What an incredible response from a heathen governor! He is convicted that this prisoner is a King. He's a different kind of King. He has come to establish His kingdom in the hearts of men and women. And He only goes where He's welcome. In Revelation 3:20 He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me."

Mark identifies the subject of His biography as Jesus Christ. He cites Old Testament prophecies that identify Him as a King. When He died on the cross that Friday afternoon, most people saw Him as a failure. His claim to be a King was ridiculed. Only criminals die on a cross.

I was really impressed with the message of the film, Mr Holland's Opus. Mr. Holland had a dream to be a great composer. But the only job he could find was a music teacher. He took the job hoping it would only be temporary. Years went by and he never became anything more than a music teacher. As if this wasn't disappointing enough, the school decided to terminate their music program due to lack of finances. Frustrated and disappointed, Mr. Holland is walking out of the school one last time with his wife and son. He here's something going on in the auditorium, and goes in to see what's going on. To his surprise it's filled with his former students over the last 30 years. One of his clarinetists has become the state governor. She gives a powerful speech. She addresses Mr. Holland, and acknowledges his feelings of being a failure. He was never able to write a symphony that made him rich and famous. But the auditorium was filled with people whose lives had been touched by him. Looking at Mr. Holland this clarinetist become governor says, "Mr. Holland, WE are your symphony. We are the melodies and notes of your opus. We are the music of your life." Mr. Holland was a different kind of composer. His music was played out in the lives of those he had touched.

Jesus is a different kind of King. When He came to this earth, He did not establish a kingdom that conquered the world by force of arms. His kingdom was established in the hearts of men and women who received Him as their Savior. The size of His kingdom depends on the number of people who open the door, and let Him come in to their hearts.

So, what matters is if Jesus is King in my heart. Don't make the mistake Pilate made. He was convicted Jesus was a King. But then he delivered Him to be crucified. He never invited Him in. Jesus is knocking. Won't you open the door?