

Take-Home Sheet | Session 1

The Beginning of the Gospel (Mark 1:1-13)

A Ransom for Many: A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of Mark

What We Found

Mark opens with a royal proclamation: "*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" The word "gospel" was herald's language, news of a king. We discovered that Mark's opening quotation weaves Malachi 3:1 into Isaiah 40:3, and that in Isaiah the way being prepared is the way of the LORD himself. John the Baptist arrives dressed as Elijah (2 Kings 1:8; Malachi 4:5), the promised forerunner, which means the LORD is next on stage, and the next one on stage is Jesus.

At the baptism, Mark's Greek says the heavens were *torn open (schizo)*, answering Isaiah's ancient prayer: "O that you would rend the heavens and come down" (Isaiah 64:1). The Father's voice braided three Scriptures into one sentence: the King of Psalm 2:7, the Servant of Isaiah 42:1, and the beloved son of Genesis 22:2. King, Servant, beloved Son bound for the altar. Then the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness for forty days, re-living Israel's forty years of testing, and where Israel failed, the beloved Son was faithful.

And we noticed the strangest thing of all: Mark told *us* who Jesus is in the very first verse. But inside the story, no human character has yet said it aloud.

My Guess (write it, seal it, do not share it)

Mark hands the reader the answer in verse 1: Jesus is the Son of God. But no human character in the story has said it out loud. Here is your sealed guess, to be opened at the end of our study:

Who do you think will be the FIRST human being in Mark's Gospel to call Jesus the Son of God, and at what moment will it happen?

My guess:

Fold this sheet, write your name on the outside, and bring it back. We will open the guesses together when we reach the answer.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: Papias of Hierapolis (2nd century, preserved by Eusebius, Church History 3.39)

Papias, a bishop writing within living memory of the apostles, records that Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote down accurately what he remembered of the Lord's words and deeds, careful to omit nothing he had heard and to state nothing falsely. The Gospel you are reading is, by early testimony, the preaching of St. Peter preserved by his companion.

Voices of the Church: St. Irenaeus of Lyons (Against Heresies 3.1.1)

St. Irenaeus testifies that Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed down to us in writing the things Peter had preached. Its apostolic root anchors its witness; as Sacred Scripture, its authority rests on divine inspiration.

Voices of the Church: St. Jerome (Preface to his Commentary on Matthew)

St. Jerome assigns the lion, one of the four living creatures of Ezekiel and Revelation, to Mark, because his Gospel opens with a voice roaring in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord." That is why the lion became the enduring symbol of St. Mark.

Live It This Week

- Each morning, before checking your phone, make the Sign of the Cross with intention and say: "I am a beloved son / daughter of the Father." Let the day begin from identity, not performance.
- Once this week, bless yourself with holy water on entering a church and consciously renew your baptismal promises.
- Read Mark 1:1-13 once more on your own, slowly, and mark every Old Testament echo you can now hear.

Scripture Memory Verse

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11, RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Mark 1:14-45. Watch how often Mark says "immediately," and watch what Jesus tells people not to do.

Catechism References

CCC 422, 535-537, 538-540, 1224