

# JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MESSAGE: THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD MARK 01:14–15

## *Introduction*

The good news of the gospel includes three emphatic points.

- I. Jesus preached the good news of the gospel (v. 14).
- II. The time has come (v. 15).
- III. The Kingdom of God is near (v. 15).
- IV. Repent and believe (v. 15).

## **I. *Mark 01:14 Jesus Christ's Ministry in Galilee***

Jesus preached the good news of God. Mark says Jesus began to preach the good news of God throughout Galilee when John was put in prison. This statement serves as a date to fix the approximate time that Jesus began to minister in Galilee. One year had passed between Mk. 1:13 and 1:14. Mark does not cover the events that took place between the temptation of Jesus and the imprisonment of John the Baptist. They are covered by Jn. 1:19 - 4:54. Apparently, the order of events was this:

1. Two of John's disciples, Andrew and Peter, became followers of Jesus right after Jesus' baptism (Jn. 1:35-42).
2. The very next day Jesus, accompanied by Andrew and Peter, left Judea and went into Galilee. It was there that Philip and Nathaniel became followers of Jesus (Jn. 1:43-51), and that the first miracle took place at Cana (Jn. 2:1-11).
3. Jesus then took His family and His followers and moved to Capernaum, which was to become His headquarters (Mt. 4:12-13). But He stayed there only a few days, probably just long enough to move His family's belongings.
4. The Passover was at hand, so Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate it (Jn. 2:13). It was while there that the first cleansing of the temple and the conversation with Nicodemus about the new birth took place (Jn. 2:14-3:1f).
5. Jesus then began to move about Judea and to openly preach and baptise (Jn. 3:22). But His ministry posed a problem for John and aroused the opposition of the religious leaders. Consequently, He left Judea and returned to Galilee (Jn. 3:23-4:3).
6. It was at this point that Mark (also Mathew) picked up the story of Jesus' ministry. The reasons why Jesus chose Galilee to be the centre for most of His ministry should be noted.

Christ chose to set up his headquarters in Galilee. He left Nazareth. Why? Nazareth was His hometown. Why did He not make his hometown His headquarters? The

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reason is clear: the city had rejected Christ: “No prophet is accepted in His home town” (Lk. 4:24). They had thrown Him out and had attempted to kill Him (Lk. 4:29). Therefore, Christ set up headquarters in the city of Capernaum. Capernaum lay in the northernmost point of Palestine. It was deliberately chosen by Christ as “His own town” (Mt. 9:1; Isa. 9:1-7).

God had prepared Galilee down through history as venue for His Son’s ministry. Several facts show this (see Gal. 4:4).

- a. Throughout history Galilee had been invaded and repopulated again and again with different people and cultures from all over the world. Over the years such an influx of differing people had created an atmosphere susceptible to new personalities and ideas.
- b. Galilee was strategically located. The world’s leading roads passed right through its borders. Merchants from all over the world passed through, boarding in its cities.
- c. Galilee was heavily populated. It was also surrounded by the Samaritans, Phoenicians and Syrians making it an open door for world evangelization. It was one of the most fertile lands in that part of the world. This fact, plus the travelling trade, led numbers to settle within its borders. There were within the district over two hundred cities with a population of fifteen thousand or more. There were multitudes for Jesus to reach.
- d. Galilee was open to new and fresh ideas. Its people, having come from all over the world, were liberal minded, always looking for new and fresh ideas to stimulate and challenge their thinking.

It was for these reasons that Christ chose Galilee to begin His ministry. The area was an open door for people to spread the news that the Messiah had come and the Kingdom of Heaven was being ushered in.

**Thought 1.** A person’s place of ministry should be deliberately chosen. He should consider strategic locations for ministry.

**Mat 28:19-20** “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Mark 16:15** He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

**Acts 1:8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

**Thought 2.** People can reject the gospel and the Saviour. Just imagine! The Lord’s own hometown rejected Him.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 15:01–11 GOOD NEWS, GOSPEL

Gospel means “Good News.” There is only one gospel, but it is described in different ways. It is called the “Good News of the Kingdom and the Good News of God” (Mt. 4:23; Mk. 1:14); the “Gospel of God’s Grace” (Acts 20:24); the “Gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1); the “Gospel of Christ” (Mk. 1:1; Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor. 4:4; 10:14); the “glorious Gospel” (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11); and the “Eternal Gospel” (Rev. 14:6). □

### II. *Mark 01:15 Fullness of Time*

First, the good news of God declares the time has come. The time has come for what? For the coming of Christ, God’s Messiah. It was time for the salvation of man to come upon the world scene. Two things were meant by “the time has come” or “the time had fully come” (Gal. 4:4).

1. World and religious events were ready for the coming of Christ.
  - a. The law had done its educational work. It had shown through the Jewish nation that men are terrible transgressors. Despite all of God’s favour and blessings, man still failed to worship God in love. The world now had a picture of the depraved heart of man.
  - b. The world was full of people spiritually starved. The worship of self, of pleasure, of gods, of philosophical ethics left many empty and barren. The soul was now ready to have its hunger met.
  - c. The world was at peace under Roman rule. The world was an open door for the spread of the good news of God — without any restraint.
  - d. The world spoke Greek as a basic language. This made communication possible with many from all over the world.
  - e. The world had a system of roads for mass travel. This allowed Christian missionaries to reach the farthest parts of the earth. It also brought commercial travelers to metropolitan centres where Christian believers were concentrated.

*Gal 4:4-6* But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”

*1 Tim 2:5-6* For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

*Heb 9:26* Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

**Titus 1:2** *A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.*

2. Prophetic events were ready for the coming of Christ. God had foretold that Elijah must *first* come and prepare the way (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1). Elijah came in the person of John the Baptist (Mt. 11:10). But now John was passing from the scene. His ministry of preparing the way for the Messiah was completed. It was now time for the Messiah to appear in force, proclaiming the glorious good news of God's kingdom. Mathew and Peter, as well as Mark, stress that "the time has come" for the Messiah to appear. The fact that the time was stressed so much points to Jesus as the true Messiah and gives additional proof of His Messiahship.

**Mat 4:12, 17** *When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*

**Acts 10:36-37** *You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached.*

**Thought 1.** Note two significant applications.

- 1) God prepared the way for His Son by moving world events. He controlled history and events, and He controls all events and circumstances for the sake of His people.

**Rom 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

- 2) God fulfilled His promise to prepare the way for His Son. He will fulfil His promises to believers. He prepares the way for every genuine believer, running ahead of the believer to take care of him.

**Rom 4:21** *Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*

**2 Cor 1:20** *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.*

**Isa 43:2** *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

### III. **Mark 01:15 Kingdom of God**

Second, the good news of God declares that the Kingdom of God is near. (See *The Kingdom of God*, Mt. 19: 23-24).

**Luke 16:16** *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it."*

**Luke 17:20-21** *Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."*

**Mark 1:14-15** *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

**Luke 6:20** *Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."*

**John 3:3, 5** *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

**Rom 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

#### **IV. Mark 01:15 Repentance and Belief**

Third, the good news of God declares that a person must repent and believe the good news of God. Both repentance and belief are essential.

1. Repentance by itself does not satisfy the law which was formerly broken. A person may repent and change from his former life, but repentance is not enough. Payment and satisfaction must be made for the laws he has already broken. This is why a person must believe in the good news about Jesus Christ. Jesus kept the law perfectly. He lived a sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22). He was perfectly righteous. As such, He satisfied God perfectly. He stood as the Perfect Man, the Ideal Man, the Pattern of what every man should be. And as the *Ideal Man He could stand for every man* and offer Himself to God as the *Ideal Payment*, the *Ideal Satisfaction* for all who had broken the law of God. This is the glorious good news of God, the *good news* preached by Jesus Christ throughout Galilee. The person who becomes acceptable to God is the person who repents and believes in the good news of God, who believes that Jesus is God's Son (Mk. 1:1), that Jesus is the *Ideal Man* who has made the *perfect payment*, the perfect satisfaction for our sins. Jesus is the propitiation for sins (See *Atoning Sacrifice*, 1 Jn. 2:2; and *Justification*, Rom. 5:1.)

**2 Cor 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Heb 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.*

**Heb 7:25-26** *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

**1 Pet 1:18-19** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

**1 Pet 2:22-24** *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

2. Faith by itself does not satisfy the law. Faith without repentance, without a true change of life, is insincere. It is profession only. It presumes upon God, thinking He will excuse a self-centred life just like a grandfather who unwisely pampers and indulges a spoiled grandchild. Faith in Christ, in His satisfaction for sin, and repentance are both essential to enter the Kingdom of God. (See *Repentance*, Acts 17:29-30.)

**Mat 3:2** *And saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”*

**Luke 13:3** *“I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”*

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

**Acts 2:38** *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

**Acts 3:19** *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

**Rom 10:9-10** *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

**2 Chr 7:14** *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

**Isa 55:7** *Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

**Ezek 18:21** *“But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die.”*

(See *Obedience and Belief*, Acts 5:32; and *Living by Faith*, Heb. 10:38). ■

1 JOHN 02: 02  
ATONING SACRIFICE, PROPITIATION (HILASMOS)

*He was the anointing sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 02:02*

Propitiation means to sacrifice in order to appease; to satisfy; to cover; to pay the penalty for. It is a sacrificial word. In the Old Testament when a man sinned or something went wrong, he brought a sacrifice to God. The idea was that the sacrifice would appease and pacify and satisfy God. He thought God would be gracious to him and place the punishment for his sin upon the animal. When things go wrong, man has always offered to fast and pray and serve with renewed vigour, or else he has offered to give up some meaningful pleasure or possession. There is a feeling that this kind of denial or renewed sacrifice appeases and satisfies God.

It is true that God told Israel to offer sacrifices. But He did it for a reason: to teach Israel, and through them the world, that the answer does not lie in human or animal sacrifice. A human sacrifice cannot bring about a right relationship with God. Man's problem is too deep for human sacrifice; his contamination too severe; his disease too terrible; his infection too deadly. The paraphernalia of earthly sacrifice can never put things right with God.

The reason is simply stated. Man's sin has cut him off from God, severed his relationship with God, put God out of *arm's reach*. Man instinctively senses this. Thus, when man fails to get satisfaction from his sacrifice, he often returns to his former behaviour and practices.

What man needs is to be disinfected, to have his sins covered, He needs to know beyond a doubt that God does accept him and is satisfied with him. And then he needs a power to live for God.

This comes about through propitiation. Four things need to be said about propitiation.

1. God is the One who has to be appeased, satisfied, and propitiated. The Bible is not speaking of reconciliation. The Bible never says that God has to be reconciled to man. God is already the friend of man; He loves man. It is man who needs to be reconciled to God. Man is the one who holds enmity, who ignores, neglects and rejects God. Thus God is the One who has to be appeased or propitiated (cp. Lk. 18:13).

There is another thought here as well. God is righteous and holy, and His righteousness and holiness have to be satisfied. He can only accept a person who is perfectly righteous and holy. It might be said that anything less than perfection would contaminate the very atmosphere around God. And the presence and

dwelling place of God would no longer be the utopia which God has prepared for the believer and for which man dreams.

2. Jesus Christ is the propitiation, the atoning sacrifice, the satisfaction for sins. Christ was completely righteous and holy; therefore, He was the perfect and ideal Man. This means that His death was the perfect and ideal sacrifice. God was able to satisfy His justice against sins by casting it against Christ. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ completely satisfied and appeased the righteousness of God (1 Jn. 4:9-10).
3. Propitiation means *coverage*. Christ covers our sins so that God no longer can see them (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:2).
4. Propitiation finds its type in the mercy seat, that is, in the lid of the ark (Heb. 9:5). God had said that man was to approach Him through the sacrifice of an animal, through the shedding of blood. The lid or covering of the ark was sprinkled once a year with the blood of a perfect animal. This signified that the life of the people was being offered to God in the blood of the victim. God was thereby appeased and satisfied. (Cp. Lk. 18:13; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10.) □

### ACTS 05:32 OBEDIENCE AND BELIEF

*“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” Acts 05:32*

The Holy Spirit is given to “those who obey Him.” Note how the word *obedience* is used instead of *believe*. To believe is *to obey*. They are one and the same. If a person believes, he obeys. (See *Saving Faith*, Jn. 2:24)

**Luke 11:13** *“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

**John 4:50** *Jesus replied, “You may go. Your son will live.” The man took Jesus at his word and departed.*

**Heb 5:9** *And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. □*



## HEBREWS 10:38 LIVING BY FAITH

*“But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” Hebrews 10:38*

The Christian believer is to walk by faith, not by feelings and emotions. The tendency of people, even of Christians, is to live by their feelings and emotions. They act according to their feelings. They experience some emotion, so they behave according to that emotion. If they feel bad, they act irresponsibly: grumbling, complaining, and reacting. If they feel good, they act happy. Their behaviour is determined by how they feel and react to emotional experiences.

Living by one’s feelings is contrary to God’s will. “My righteous one will live by faith” — this is God’s will. The Christian is to let faith control him. He is to let faith control his life and the particular problems that confront him every so often.

How does a believer live by faith? What does it mean *to live by faith!* It means to do four things — consistently.

1. The believer is to commit his life and his problems to God — all day long — throughout all his waking hours. He is to take the experiences and the problems of his day and commit them to God *once-for-all*. He is to believe that God hears his commitment and gives the strength to walk triumphantly throughout the day. He is to know that God does not like a whining, whimpering child begging and begging for strength when all he is doing is wallowing around in self-pity.
2. The believer is to deny self. The feelings, emotions, and selfishness of his flesh are to be rejected, even ignored if necessary.
3. The believer is to act as though he has made a commitment to God. He *has made* a commitment, so he is to act like it. His feelings are immaterial. He is to act responsibly. He is to go ahead and do what he should be doing. He is to behave as he should.
4. Then while the believer is doing what he ought to be doing, he is to be asking God for His grace and strength. He is to be acknowledging God in all His ways throughout the whole day. He is to walk in prayer all day long, asking forgiveness as he comes short, slips, and falls; praising and thanking God for His eternal mercy and grace.

God does not direct the believer’s path and then the believer feels good and goes about doing right. It is while the believer is going about his affairs in a responsible way that God directs his paths. This is the life of the new and living faith wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ for those who believe and follow Him. □

JOHN 02: 24  
SAVING FAITH : BELIEVE, COMMIT, ENTRUST

The word commit or entrust is the very same word “believe” (see Jn. 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is — of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Saviour just as A J Abdul Kalam lived upon earth as the President of India. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of Abdul Kalam.
2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
3. Saving faith is commitment — the commitment of a man’s total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man’s commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man’s affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being, and possessions into Jesus’ hands. He lays himself upon Jesus’ keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man’s whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage.

1. There is the step of *seeing* (Jn. 2:23) or *hearing* (Rom. 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.
2. There is the step of *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits (entrusts) and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life. □

### ACTS 17:29–30 REPENTANCE

*“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man’s design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.” Acts 17:29-30*

Repentance means to change; to turn; to change one’s mind; to turn one’s life. It is a turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of mind, a forsaking of sin. It is putting sin out of one’s thoughts and behaviour. It is resolving never to think or do a thing again. (See Mt. 3:2; Lk. 13:2-3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 26:20.) The change is turning away from lying, stealing, cheating, immorality, cursing, drunkenness, and the other so-called glaring *sins of the sinful nature*. But the change is also turning away from *the silent sins of the spirit* such as self-centredness, selfishness, envy, bitterness, pride, anger, covetousness, evil thoughts, hopelessness, laziness, jealousy, lust.

1. Repentance involves two turns. There is a negative turn away from sin and a positive turn toward God. It is a turning to God and away from sin, whether sins of thought or action.
2. Repentance is more than sorrow. Sorrow may or may not be involved in repentance. A person may repent simply because he wills and acts to change; or a person may repent because he senses an agonizing sorrow within. But the sense or feeling of sorrow is not repentance. Repentance is both the change of mind and the actual turning of one’s life away from sin and toward God. □

### ROMANS 05:01 JUSTIFICATION AND PEACE

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 05:01*

The first result of justification is peace with God.

1. The meaning of peace with God is striking. Peace with God does not mean escapism, a quiet atmosphere, the absence of trouble, the control of situations by

positive thinking, the denial of problems, the ability to keep from facing reality. Peace *with* God means the *sense and knowledge...*

- that one has restored his relationship with God.
- that one is no longer alienated and separated from God.
- that one is now reconciled with God.
- that one is now accepted by God.
- that one is freed from the wrath and judgment of God.
- that one is freed from fearing God's wrath and judgment.
- that one is now pleasing God.
- that one is at peace with God.

2. The source of peace is Jesus Christ. Men can have peace with God only because of Jesus Christ. It is He who reconciles men to God. He has made peace by the blood of His cross.

*Eph 2:14-15 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.*

*Col 1:20 And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

*Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

3. The reason we have peace is the glorious truth of justification. □