

Mark Showed Jesus Is God

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Over the years, it has often been stated that the gospel of John is the only gospel to claim that Jesus was God. Right in the very beginning of that gospel we read, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* (John 1:1.) There can be no doubt about what John is affirming. Jesus was God who came to dwell among men. But what about the other gospels?

The assumption of many is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke focus solely on the humanity of Jesus. And this is especially true of Mark’s gospel, they say. After all, Mark takes great care to show Jesus in all His humanity. He was hungry, needed periods of time to rest, slept, had pity, experienced times of bewilderment, sighed and grieved at people’s lack of faith, was indignant at times, and He bled and died. He did all the things humans do, but without sin.

Because of this, many have concluded that there were different views of Jesus in early Christianity. Certainly, we can all agree that the different gospels have different emphases and articulate truths about Jesus in their own ways. But is it the case that gospels like Mark view Jesus as a mere human? Not at all. In fact, it won’t hurt to remember that Mark presents Jesus as God from the very opening verses of his gospel.

For a gospel written with a Roman audience in mind, Mark does not begin his story of Jesus where we might expect. He doesn’t begin with Jesus’ birth, or his baptism, or with any other event during the life of Christ. Instead, Mark reminds the reader that the story of the gospel began many generations before when God made promises to the people of Israel. In other words, Mark does not present Jesus as the start of a new story, but as the completion of an old one.

What Mark does is begin his gospel with citations from the Old Testament. He begins, *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way”* (Mark 1:1-2.) Mark states bluntly that Jesus is the son of God but how does he prove that? By quoting from Isaiah 40:3 which says, *“A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* In the Isaiah text, whose way is being prepared? John the Baptist would prepare the way for God to come. This “preparing the way of the Lord” is repeated in Malachi 3:1, *“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.”* And the Malachi text is clear that it is God Himself Who is coming. So, in both Old Testament prophecies, God is saying that it is My messenger that is coming to prepare My way. But in Mark’s quotation, it is God’s messenger who will come before “your face” and prepare “your” (that is, Jesus’) way. In other words, Jesus is God, so says Mark. This is further confirmed by the second quotation from Isaiah 40:3. Read the verse above again then notice Mark 1:3, “ the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” Isaiah said the way was being made straight for “our God” but Mark says, in referring to Jesus as the son of God, make “his” paths straight. Right from the beginning of Mark’s gospel, Jesus is established as God and the rest of the book shows us how He interacted with us humans.