

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME ONE

STUDY TWO

Are You Ready for Some Good News?

Mark 1:1–13

Who isn't ready for some good news? News that will be good no matter how bad the times? When you come to this good news that has been with us beyond the beginning of time, you realize it's able to transform your entire perspective.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

ONE sentence and you are hooked!

It is impossible to put a book down when the first sentence instantly grabs your attention. Good writers know how to cut to the chase and capture your curiosity right from the start. One opening line and you find yourself in the story. You wait with bated breath for the next line.

Mark began his gospel with a riveting first sentence that immediately draws you into his account of Jesus. No lengthy genealogy as in Matthew's gospel. No introductory sentence made of eighty words as in Luke's. No extensive theological prologue as in John's. He put it all together in this opening sentence, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1 NASB).

The Greek word *euangelion* translated "gospel" means "good news." Mark's first line bursts through life's dark clouds, as if Mark is exclaiming, *Are you ready for some good news?* Your soul responds, *Yes!* And with breathless excitement, you want to know more.

In our previous *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we learned about John Mark, the failed former missionary whom God gave a second chance and commissioned to write the first account of Jesus. Mark's pragmatic, action-packed approach portrays Jesus as the Servant of God at work redeeming sinners, restoring failures, and showing the way of true life.

In this Bible study, we'll hear Mark's "good news" and take our first steps down a path that will transform our lives.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



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Chuck's message.

The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll
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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Are You Ready for Some Good News?

Mark 1:1–13



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Let your soul hear and grasp these words:

*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.* (Psalm 34:18)

Turn your mind to God's holy presence. Believe that He is close to you. Humble your heart before His awesome might. As you begin this Bible study, express your reliance on the only One who is always near and able to save.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Mark's original readers were suffering intense persecution. Nero had been rounding up Christians and forcing them to worship Roman gods or be brutally tortured and killed. Some Christians were torn apart by wild beasts, some were crucified, some were burned alive. Mark's good news message came as a fresh wind of hope for these broken and crushed people.

Knowing their situation was urgent, Mark wasted no time assuring them that what they believed about Jesus was true. God had come near. Jesus is the Servant who came to save, the Son of God whose kingdom will never end!



Observation: The Introduction of the Gospel of Mark

Observation is the first task in the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method.¹ Read carefully [Mark 1:1–13](#). Your goal is simply to see what it says, and you may want to read it more than once. Pay attention to the action words, the flow of thought, the main themes, and any words or phrases that stand out to you.

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Mark 1:1–13

The First Sentence: Good News—Mark 1:1

Mark's first word answers the question, "When?" The Greek word is *arche*, which means "beginning." Mark may have been alluding to Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning," to underscore the gospel's origin in God's eternal design for His creation. What is the "good news," according to Mark 1:1? How does Mark's first sentence build anticipation for the rest of his gospel?

The good news is a person. Never forget it. Other religions revolve around these other things: a chronicle of events, a convoluted mystery, a philosophical system of thought. But Christianity focuses all attention on the person of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Main Characters—Mark 1:2–11

Mark then introduced the main characters of the story, tying them to Old Testament prophecy. Read Mark 1:2–11. What do you observe in 1:2–3 about Malachi's and Isaiah's prophecies and how God was behind it all?

Observe carefully Mark's description of John the Baptizer in the wilderness. Describe his appearance and unique role in 1:4–8.

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One day, while busily engaged in preaching and baptizing, John saw Jesus of Nazareth come to be baptized by him, which signaled the official beginning of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 3:14–15). In Mark 1:9–11, what happened when Jesus came up out of the water? Look closely at these verses. What do you see?

This is one of those rare moments in all Scripture where you have a gathering of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in one setting. What a moment!
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Temptations of the Enemy—Mark 1:12–13

Mark's brevity leaves room for our imagination to fill in the scene. See the Spirit compelling Jesus to go into the wilderness. Note the setting and duration. What does Mark 1:12–13 say about Jesus' temptations, His archenemy, and the angelic assistance?

We heard Mark declare the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We saw John the Baptizer, the forerunner who was foretold in the Old Testament, the Trinity in one setting, and Jesus enduring the temptations of the Enemy for forty days and then being strengthened by angels. What an introduction!



Interpretation: Exploring the Meaning of Mark's Introduction

The second step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, interpretation, helps us grasp the meaning of [Mark 1:1–13](#).

Are You Ready for Some Good News?

Mark 1:1–13

The good news is a person, Jesus Christ—not a philosophy, a religious ritual, or some self-help strategy. What is it about Jesus that makes Him the good news? How would you explain Mark’s good news in your own words?

The good news is that the Father sees us in our need, and knowing we cannot resolve the mess we’ve made of our lives, He gives us the answer.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Among the main characters of the account, we met John the Baptizer in Mark 1:2–8. Explore the sections “Message” and “John and Jesus” in the article “[John the Baptist](#)” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at [biblegateway.com](#). How would you explain John’s message and ministry effectiveness?

You know what drew them to John? Authenticity. He wasn’t interested in what they thought of him. He didn’t care about the custom of the day. He didn’t mind that they heard the word sin for the first time. As a matter of fact, he knew it was life-changing for them—if they’d only believe it! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Reread [Mark 1:12–13](#) in the MSG and the J. B. Phillips translations. What do you learn about Jesus from this episode in His life?

The Spirit of God enables Jesus with power to face what is right now before Him and would be before Him for the next three and a half years of ministry.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: Some Good News!

The third step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, correlation, helps us grasp the big picture by comparing our passage with other passages of Scripture.

Compare Mark's opening line with Paul's opening words in his letter to the Galatians ([Mark 1:1](#); [Galatians 1:1–17](#)). What can we learn from both passages about the good news? How can we proclaim Jesus Christ to our world today?

Every message preached in an evangelical church is to center attention on the person of Christ. Never on the messenger. Never on the building. Never on a program. Always on the person of Jesus Christ. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Compare John the Baptizer's attitude in Mark's gospel and in John's gospel ([Mark 1:2–8](#); [John 3:22–30](#)). What are the common themes? How can believers today model these attitudes?

*Don't ever let your life get so dark that it eclipses the good news.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



Application: Remember the Good News!

The final step of our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, application, helps us live out what we have learned. Whether we are in the wilderness or in places of comfort, the good news can transform lives if we *believe* it, *remember* it, and *share* it with someone. In what way has the Holy Spirit encouraged your heart with the good news?

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Having observed the obedience and humility of John the Baptizer and Jesus, think of one area of your life that the Holy Spirit is asking you to submit to Him. What steps can you take to express your submission to God and resist the devil and his forces? Then, express your gratitude to God for the provision of His power and strength for you to obey.

Has Mark's opening line captured your attention? Are you excited to discover more about Jesus? There's more good news to come when Jesus starts preaching and performing miracles. But right before doing that, He called His first disciples—just like He calls us today. We'll find out more in the next *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study. We can't wait to follow Jesus!



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the good news! I submit myself to You once again, and I ask You to give me strength and wisdom in decisions I must make. Help me resist our archenemy and remember the victory You've already won for me by the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ! In His name, I pray these things. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](https://www.insight.org/how-does-pastor-chuck-swindoll-study-the-bible)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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