



during the Jewish revolt, had a boar on their insignia, making the ill-fated swine of this story potentially significant. This legion was also responsible for burning the city of Gerasa (see, for example, Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, p. 140-141).

It might be, however, that the reference to the “good news” of Jesus Christ is inspired more by the hopes presented in Isaiah. Immediately following the opening incipit, in Mark 1:3 (“A voice crying out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord...’”), Isaiah 40:3 is alluded to. As Craig Evans discusses, the term “good news” is found in various parts of Isaiah (also 41:21-29, 52:7-12, 60:1-7, 61:1-11) in reference to the restoration of Jerusalem and a new promised land, a coming herald who is to proclaim God’s reign, and an anointed messenger who will heal the blind and give good news to those who suffer. Nonetheless, this vision of renewal does somewhat mirror the promise of Roman new world order, which embodied law, order, prosperity, health, and justice. It may be, then, that the Markan author fuses together the seemingly conflicting rulerships of God and Rome (Craig Evans, “Mark’s Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription,” p. 76-77).

The final two words of the opening incipit, “???? ????,” are not witnessed in all manuscripts (for the specifics, see *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland 26th edition, p. 89), and according to Bruce Metzger (*A Textual Commentary*, p. 73), may be the result of a copying error. Adela Yarbro Collins (“Establishing the Text: Mark 1:1”), however, argues that the words are a deliberate, later addition from the second century CE. As Morna Hooker (*The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, p. 34) points out, Mark’s Christology does not really lose anything without the presence of the phrase, but it is certainly consistent with the Gospel writer’s apparent beliefs. Scholars remain divided. If the phrase “son of God” was not an original feature of the text, therefore, then it could be that a later redactor wished to emphasise from the start a strong theological statement – that Jesus has divine parentage, reinforce some of the anti-Roman rhetoric which is arguably present throughout the rest of the Gospel (although not all scholars agree over the extent and/or presence of such sentiments), or possibly even both.

Keywords in the original language:

- [??????????](#)
- [???? ????](#)
- [????](#)
- [?????? ??????](#)

Thematic keywords in English:

- [Christ](#)
- [good news](#)
- [imperial cult](#)
- [imperial language](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [son of God](#)

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