

## 1. Jesus as the True King

- Mark presents Jesus as the True King of Heaven and Earth.
- Mark's crucifixion sequence (Mark 15: 16-24) is presented as a Coronation or Triumph.<sup>1</sup>
  - Similar to events from the Roman Emperors
    - Speaks the cultural language of what Jesus' march to the cross is.
- Presented within the cultural context of the 1<sup>st</sup>-century – the Roman Empire.

## 2. Cultural and Historical Context of Mark:

- Believe to have been written in Rome.
- Under the nose of the Caesar and the Imperial Cult - sanctioned worship of the Caesar.
- A mixture of Jewish background/history/expectations and the language of the Imperial Cult.
- Challenges the notion within the Imperial Cult – that Caesar is Lord.

## 3. Language of the Imperial Cult<sup>2</sup>

- "Good News" – the birth of or arrival of a King<sup>3</sup>
- Roman Triumph – affirming the emperor's sovereignty and divinity.
- Emperor's Advent and promise of a New World Order
- Parusia – the return of a King (1 Thessalonians 4:15)
- Apotheosis – the ascension to god status.
  - Apotheosis of Julius Caesar means that Caesar Augustus is the 'son of a god.'<sup>4</sup>
  - See also the apotheosis of Titus<sup>5 6</sup>

## 4. Caesar Augustus and the Imperial Cult:

- Titles for Caesar Augustus include:
  - Lord
  - Son of god (the god being Julius Caesar – see #3 above)
  - Divine
  - God from God

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<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, Thomas. "Jesus' Triumphal March to Crucifixion," Bible Review 13, no. 1 (1997): 30–37. (<https://www.baslibrary.org/bible-review/13/1/11>).

<sup>2</sup> Evans, Craig A. 2000. "Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*. No. 1, (pp. 67-81)

<sup>3</sup> Calendar Inscription from Priene - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar\\_Inscription\\_of\\_Priene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar_Inscription_of_Priene)

<sup>4</sup> Suetonius, *The Life of Julius Caesar*, 88:1.

<sup>5</sup> Apotheosis of Titus – Wellesley.edu ([tinyurl.com/22jfnasd](http://tinyurl.com/22jfnasd)).

<sup>6</sup> Kreitzer, Larry. 'Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor' in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Dec., 1990, Vol. 53, No. 4, pp. 210-217.

5. Literary Structure:

- *Inclusio*:

A literary device based on a concentric principle that consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end section. The purpose of the *inclusio* is to give structure to the text and to alert the reader/hearer of prominent themes.

- Mark 1:11 – a voice (God) proclaims 'son.'
- Mark 15:39 – a voice (representative of Rome) proclaims 'son of God'
- What is the (a) message of Mark?
- Jesus is the AUTHENTIC Son of God –
  - This is not merely a theological proposition.
  - This is a real-world statement that subverts the Roman government!
  - If you make this claim that Jesus is the 'Son of God', then you are saying that Caesar isn't. Because of a statement like this, you will likely pay a consequence.

6. Who is the real King? Who is Lord?

- Mark 15: 1-15 – is a lead-up conversation about Jesus as the King of the Jews.
- Mark 15: 16-24 – is the Coronation ceremony.
- Mark 15: 26 – the sign above Jesus "THE KING OF THE JEWS"

7. What is the message of Mark?

- Jesus is the Messiah
- Jesus is the TRUE Son of God
- Jesus is the REAL King.
- This message is communicated using the cultural context of the Roman Empire and the Caesars

The Reversal of the Kingdom of God

In God's Kingdom – the reign of the king is not about power in the earthly sense.  
The one who sacrifices himself for the sins of others becomes the King.