

Mark 1:1 NIV

**Is Jesus' message outmoded?
"The beginning of the gospel about
Jesus Christ, the Son of God."**

**A truer to the original translation of
Mark's opening verse would read:**

**"The beginning of the splendid
news about Jesus, the Christ."**

**You may be thinking, "Thanks for pointing
out this better translation, Bob, but I'm
more concerned about the question:**

'How can this 2000 year-old book help me?'"

At times, old things are better.

**As I've mentioned, for many years of my
Hollywood Church of Christ ministry,
I drove a 56 Chevy as my business car.**

That old vehicle gave many advantages.

**Since the car's unique color stood out, Norma
nearly always knew where I was because
people reported to her when they saw me.**

That 56 Chevy also gave me some status.

**For one, the LA Times once carried an article
reporting that Mercedes-Benzes were as
common as bellybuttons in Beverly Hills, but
56 Chevrolets were rare (of course, we never
lived in Beverly Hills).**



Once I stopped for a red light in Hollywood. An attractive blonde actress-type drove up beside me in a large one-of-a-kind sports car.

Looking at the Chevy with a smile she said,

"I like your car."

I responded saying,

"I like yours, too!"

Once on our way back to L.A. from the Grand Canyon North Rim, the Chevy's radiator needed replacing and the engine ran hot.

In 115 degree temperature, Norma and I drove through Las Vegas and then Baker, CA.

As we entered the mountains, the Chevy severely overheated.

To help dissipate the engine heat, we turned on the heater.

Norma sat squat-legged to keep her feet and legs away from the heat.

She used ice packs to cool my worried brow.

We "chugged" along at about 45 mph.

I hoped we could climb to top of the mountain pass before the engine blew up.

A new Mercedes coupe blew past us traveling about 75, prompting Norma to longingly say, "That's what I'd like to drive."

The truth repeatedly smacked me that old isn't necessarily better.

Many old things are out-of-date and outmoded.

Is Jesus good news obsolete?

Is it merely of historical interest like McGuffey's Reader or The Iliad and The Odyssey?

Granted, Jesus' great news powerfully changed first century men and women.

Can it benefit people in the 21st Century?

If Jesus' message can't help now, our worship is no more value than a rusty radiator.

Sure the Gospel once changed lives.

But is it now outmoded?

Should something supersede it?

Some say, "It definitely needs upgrading."

Others argue that the Gospel originated in a backward country, when people had little scientific knowledge.

I suspect that more words have been printed in last 10 years than in all the previous millennia.

The Internet and artificial intelligence proliferate information.

We have almost instant communication.

How can a two-thousand-year-old religion or book help now?

Don't we need something more sophisticated, more up-to-date?

Why do we need religion at all?

Isn't what we need a philosophy that considers the advances of modern science and technology?



Univ. of Chicago

Toward the close of the 20th Century, "Science Digest" reported on a meeting sponsored by the World Council of Churches and MIT for the purpose of developing a space-age religion.

Ralph Wendell Burhoe was among those at the meeting of scientists and religious reps.

Burhoe was research Professor Emeritus in Theology and Sciences at Meadville/Lombard Theological School, which was affiliated with the prestigious University of Chicago.

“I see our task today,” **Burdhoe explained**, “as similar to that of those who labored some 2000 years ago—following such leaders as Isaiah, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Jesus, and Muhammed—to update our interpretation of the wisdom accumulated in the great world religions, so as to adapt it for significance in a radically new context in our world of science and technology.”

Burdhoe and his contemporaries concluded that it's within the ability of human beings with their science, industry, and skills to help themselves.

The group concluded.

“American technology and genius have limitless possibilities so that in the 21st century, the problems of mankind will be solved.”

“This people, this country, this generation can do anything. There is life on Mars” said Ray Bradbury, a member of the group.

At the close of the 20th century, that's what eminent scientists and religious folks said.

Compare what a great mind said about one 100 years prior as the 19th century closed.

In his work entitled “The Future of Man,” Victor Hugo wrote of the coming 20th century:

“In the 20th century, war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, hatred will be dead, frontier

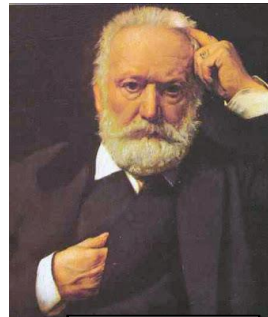
boundaries will be dead, dogmas will be dead; man will live. He will possess something higher than all these—a great country, the whole earth, and a great hope, the whole heaven.”

Hugo and his fellow geniuses didn't foresee World War I, World War II, The Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War and nearly constant Middle East conflict.

Nonetheless, another group of eminent folks proudly predicted the same thing at the close of the 20th century that intellectuals concluded one hundred years before.

As science and technology briskly evolve again, you'll agree it's fair to ask: “Are people happier now than folks were 50 or 100 years ago?”

Despite science, education, and technology, two realities of human beings remain unchanged.



Victor Hugo

First is the arrogance in us that says to God, “I don't need you.”

Consider Victor Hugo's confident statement about war, the scaffold, hatred, and dogmas being dead in the 20th cent.

War wasn't dead. The scaffold wasn't dead. Hatred wasn't dead; dogmas weren't dead. Victor Hugo and his peers were dead.

One significant quality didn't die.

The pride and arrogance rampant in Victor Hugo's time ravage folks today.

When people claim that God is a human invention and that intellectuals can capably aid human life on its upward evolutionary trend, pride multiplies.

The poet Shelley described the arrogance in Hugo's time: "But human pride is skillful to invent serious names to hide its ignorance."

In the 20th century, historian Will Durant soberly observed: "The greatest question of our time is not communism vs. individualism, not Europe vs. America, nor East vs. West. It is whether man can bear to live without God."



An honest examination and assessment would reveal this truth: Durant

Nearly all human misery can be linked to our refusal to acknowledge God and His laws.

Each of us must recognize his/her pride.

"At a Salvation Army hall, they sang with great enthusiasm an old hymn, 'Wash me and I shall be

whiter than snow.' An old gray-haired brother arose and said, 'Sisters and brethren, there's a whole sight of difference between being washed and being white-washed. The trouble with many of us is that we have been white-washed.'"¹

Pride hinders us from admitting our guilt.

We keep whitewashing instead of admitting our sin to God and humbly submitting to Him.

Uncorrected arrogance leads to our 1st problem.

Second, our mortality should humble us.

All current proud prophets will soon be dust.

So will those who swagger over their athletic ability, their intellect, their looks, or money.

As the 90th Psalm stated about 3500 years ago:

"We groan as we come to the end of our lives.

¹⁰We live to be about 70. Or we may live to be 80, if we stay healthy. But even our best days are filled with trouble and sorrow. The years quickly pass, and we are gone."²

Some of us sneak past that 80 mark, but an upper limit of 120 shuts down even the super-strong.

One, we must constantly work on our pride.

Two, we remember that we are dust.

¹ ON VESPER HILL, Robert A. Lapsley, Jr. P. 138

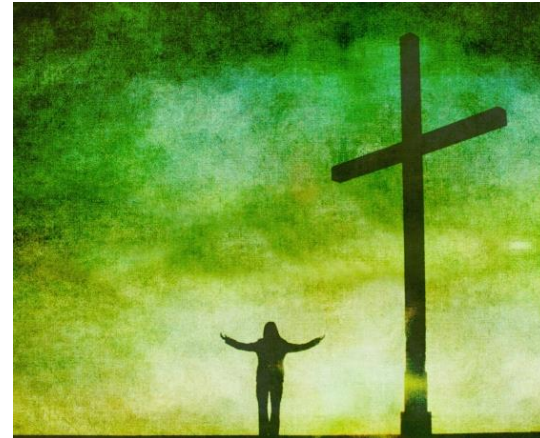
² Psalm 90: 9b-10 NIRV

Third, Mark tells of Jesus' splendid life, which made God's good news available to you and me. Mark's gospel gives us credible reasons for joy.

- A) Jesus was no ordinary man like Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, or Einstein.
- B) Jesus spoke to storms and calmed them.
- C) **With a word Jesus, healed people of chronic, persistent diseases.**
- D) Jesus ordered people to come back from the dead.
- E) **Jesus didn't just teach love as some the other great teachers did.**
- F) **From beginning to end, Jesus unselfishly, totally gave his life for you and me.**
- G) **Three days after enemies hatefully killed Jesus, he returned and proved that he was alive to scores of people.**
 - H) **We don't need a new religion.**
 - I) **We need to boldly submit to our Creator—to His love and His will through Jesus Christ his Son.**

If you want full life, accept the truth about the Son of God. Live by his example, not the teachings of any religious group or leader.
Follow God's Word and join others
in obeying Christ.

Join others in honoring God, and He'll bring you back from the dead when he appears to hold all people accountable.



Bob Blair
PO Box 176
Cleghorn, IA 51014

www.robertblairbooks.com