

182 Good news, Mk II

(Having read *The King Jesus Gospel* by Scott McKnight, and I've made some subtle but important changes to my previous attempt.^[181])

The good news is that God loves us so much that he was willing to take the risk of coming to earth as a tiny, vulnerable human baby – a claim unlike that of any other world religion.

Jesus lived an ordinary life as a carpenter for 30 years before starting to travel around, preaching about what 'his Father' God is like; and by his life and example he demonstrated that love.

The common people, especially the social outcasts of the day, loved him and followed him, hanging on his every word. As they trusted him, many of them found their lives changed: some received physical healing, and others received forgiveness for things they had done wrong.

Jesus taught them that God loved them, accepted them and wanted them to turn and face God, and rebuild their relationship with God.

But the ruling religious elite hated him because he called them out for what they really were: hypocrites, laying religious burdens on people that they themselves were not willing to shoulder. So they worked together with the political elite and had Jesus judicially tortured, publicly humiliated and murdered.

Some days later, word began to spread that Jesus had come back to life, and had been seen walking around the area, cooking food and eating with his friends.

Jesus' Jewish followers then realised that, in their religious books (what we now call the Old Testament), there were dozens and dozens of things written that they could see were prophecies that Jesus had fulfilled in his life, death and teachings.

This good news spread rapidly, and followers of 'The Way', as it was then called, proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the King – not a popular idea among the Roman rulers! Many of the followers were tortured and killed, but they still maintained that Jesus had indeed come back to life, and that, by allowing himself to be killed by the evil of humankind, Jesus the Christ had overcome, once and for all, the spiritual forces of wickedness at work in the world.

Followers of The Way continued to spread the good news (or 'gospel') that, as Jesus had taught, God loves all people of all races and languages, and wants us to establish a wonderful new community (the kingdom of God), to care for all people and to challenge evil in all its forms.

The centre of any community has to be the idea that insisting on our own way simply won't work, but if we're willing to trust God and do things God's way, we can live a life full of joy. There will still be suffering in life, but God can enable us to maintain our love for him and for others – and even for our enemies, as Jesus did.

And the overall goal is that, as God promises, one day all wrongs will be righted, all suffering ended and there will be just one perfect, loving community, enjoying being with God for ever.