

The Gospel of Mark

Lesson 2

Mark 1:1 – 13

The Title (1:1)

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- Verse 1 is a verbless sentence – a statement of title. Matthew and Luke begin with the birth and genealogies of Jesus. Mark skips these entirely since they do not fit with his purpose of presenting Jesus as the suffering Servant. The birth of a servant is unexciting and a servant's lineage means nothing.
- Beginning – Elsewhere in Scripture Jesus' baptism by John is thought to be the starting point of the gospel – the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In Acts 1:21-22 the earthly ministry of Jesus is bounded by His baptism and ascension.

²¹Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—²²beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection. Acts 1:21-22

Peter preaching to Cornelius in Acts 10:37 starts with the baptism.

³⁷you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. Acts 10:37

- Jesus – Greek for the Hebrew Yeshua (Joshua) meaning Yahweh (the Lord) is salvation or the salvation of Yahweh (the Lord). This is the name given to Joseph by the angel in Matt 1:21.
²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Matt. 1:21
- Christ – Greek for the Hebrew Messiah meaning Anointed One – signifying His office as the ruler in God's coming kingdom and the Lord's Servant (Isa 52-53).

⁶For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. Isa. 9:6-7

- The Son of God – A statement by Mark affirming the deity of Jesus.

John – Fulfills Old Testament Prophecy (1:2-3)

²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU,
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY;

³THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,
‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,
MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.’”

- This is the only place that Mark refers to the Old Testament, though Jesus quotes from it. This quote brings together Exodus 23:20 (LXX) and Malachi 3:1 (Heb) in verse 2 and Isaiah 40:3 (LXX) in verse 3. Because Mark was introducing the ministry of John the Baptist in the wilderness, he cited Isaiah as the source.

John – His Work (1:4-5)

⁴John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

- John the Baptist was introduced in the New Testament before his conception with his parents Zacharias and Elizabeth. Luke says of them:

⁶They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. Luke 1:6

- Zacharias and Elizabeth had no children which was a disgrace in Jewish society (Luke 1:25) and both were advanced in years.
- Zacharias was serving as priest in the temple when the angel Gabriel appeared to him to announce that he would be the father of the forerunner to the Messiah.

^{15c}For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. ^{16c}And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ^{17c}It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:15-17

- Elizabeth was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus probably through Mary's mother.

^{36c}And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. Luke 1:36

- First time Jesus met John was when John was ~6 months "old" (Luke 1:36-41). Mary may even have witnessed the birth of John (Luke 1:56).

- After John's birth Zacharias prophesied concerning his son:

⁶⁷And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

^{76c}And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;

⁷⁷To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation

By the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸Because of the tender mercy of our God,

With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,

⁷⁹TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,

To guide our feet into the way of peace."

⁸⁰And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel. Luke 1:67; 76-80

- Wilderness – The desolate arid region between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. Some 20 miles from Jerusalem – a full day's journey.
- All the country of Judea... All the people of Jerusalem... A continuous stream of people were traveling a long distance to hear John.

- Preaching - **ἄγγελος** - proclaiming as a herald – a bold proclamation. In Luke it describes the content of his preaching as the gospel.

¹⁸So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people. Luke 3:15-18

- “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵...confessing their sins.” The baptism here is an outward expression of what has happened internally. It is a repentance-baptism indicating that repentance has taken place. This repentance is a turning from dead works and turning to God in faith (Heb 6:1). Linked to repentance is the confessing of sin – the open, willing, acknowledging or admitting that one has missed God’s perfect mark.

¹Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works and of faith toward God**, Heb. 6:1

John – His Lifestyle (1:6)

⁶John was clothed with camel’s hair and *wore* a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey.

- John’s clothing and diet was standard dress and food for a man living in the desert. Locusts and wild honey were the common diet in desert regions.

²⁰‘All the winged insects that walk on *all* fours are detestable to you. ²¹‘Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on *all* fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth. ²²‘These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds.

²³‘But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you. Lev. 11:20-23

John – His Message (1:7-8)

⁷And he was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. ⁸“I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

- John’s preaching contrasts himself with the coming Mighty One. John so elevates the Servant that he sees himself as so low as to not be worthy to do the most menial task a slave could do. John contrasts his ministry with the coming One. John administered the outward sign of water baptism, but the coming One would give the Holy Spirit.
- What can we learn from John?
 - John had a lifelong commitment to fulfill God’s purpose for which he was created.
 - What is my purpose?
 - John preached an uncompromising message of sin, repentance, and faith.
 - Am I bold with the gospel?
 - John minimized material pleasures in his pursuit obedience.
 - Do I have a proper view of the temporal?
 - John clearly recognized his humble position before an all holy God.
 - How high is my view of God?

Jesus – His Baptism at the Jordan (1:9)

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

- Nazareth was an obscure village about 90 miles north of Jerusalem.
- John objected to baptizing Jesus (Matt 3:14).

¹⁴But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” Matt. 3:14

- Jesus' response was: **“Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”** (Matt. 3:13) “All righteousness” was refers to Jesus fulfilling the Father’s will for His son. Jesus’ baptism was not a symbol of His confession of sin, repentance, and salvation that the others who came to John experienced. Instead Jesus was identifying Himself with the sinners he came to save. According to MacArthur Jesus’ baptism:
 - 1) pictures His death and resurrection.
 - 2) prefigured the significance of Christian baptism.
 - 3) marked His first public identification with those whose sins He would bear.
 - 4) was a public affirmation of His messiahship by testimony directly from heaven.

Jesus – the Divine Response to His Baptism (1:10-11)

¹⁰Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; ¹¹and a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”

- Mark’s account mentions only Jesus seeing the heavens opening and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him. However, the account in John 1:32-34 indicates John the Baptist also saw the Spirit descend so others must have witnesses these events as well.
- “the heavens opening” – comes from the Greek □□□□□□ meaning to split or tear apart. Reminiscent of Isaiah’s prayer for mercy and deliverance.

¹ Oh, that You would rend the heavens *and* come down,
That the mountains might quake at Your presence—

² As fire kindles the brushwood, *as* fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your presence! Isa. 64:1-2

- The Spirit descended like a dove on Jesus. Luke mentions that this was in bodily form which would apparently be visible to all.

²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove... Luke 3:22

- The visible descending of the Spirit indicated Jesus’ empowerment for ministry. Jesus claimed this anointing in the synagogue in Nazareth.

¹⁷And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸**“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME,
BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.
HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,
AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,
TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,**

¹⁹**TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”**

²⁰And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹And He began to say to them, **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”** Luke 4:17-20

- and a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased – This pronouncement would remind the hearers of the Lord’s King and Servant. The tense of “am well-pleased” indicates that God is always pleased with the Son – no beginning or end.

⁶ “But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

⁷ “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You. Psa. 2:6-7

¹ “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights.
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the nations. Isa. 42:1

- All three persons of the Trinity were involved in Jesus’ baptism. The Son was empowered by the Spirit and approved by the Father.

Jesus’ Temptation (1:12-13)

¹²Immediately the Spirit impelled* Him *to go* out into the wilderness. ¹³And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

- The Spirit “drove” Jesus into the wilderness. Jesus’ first actions after His baptism was to confront the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Though not in Mark’s account Jesus’ use the word in His victory over these temptations (Matt 4:1-11; Psa 119: 9, 11).
- God does not tempt (morally neutral word meaning put to the test – translated “temp” from the context) anyone (James 1:13), but does sometimes sovereignly test us or allow Satan to tempt His children (Job 1-2). MacArthur: That is God’s plan and purpose – to use Satan’s temptations as a means of testing and strengthening our faith in Him and of our growing stronger in righteousness. (James 1:2-4)
- Wild beasts – A detail unique to Mark. Stressing the loneliness and harshness of the 40 days.
- Mark only devotes two verses to the temptation where Matthew’s account is eleven and Luke’s is thirteen. Mark’s purpose is not to fully describe the account but to show that this event began a conflict with Satan that would end at Jesus’ death with victory.

¹⁴Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.
Heb. 2:14-15

- What can we learn from Jesus?
- Jesus went out of His way to “fulfill all righteousness”.
- Do I hold back?
- Jesus dealt with temptation.
- Do I deal with temptation with the word or do I hold onto it?