

Mark Chapter 1 Continued

Mark 1:9 "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan."

“In those days”: At some unspecified time during John’s baptizing ministry at the Jordan.

“Nazareth”: An obscure village (not mentioned in the Old Testament, or by Josephus, or in the Talmud), about 70 miles North of Jerusalem, that did not enjoy a favorable reputation (John 1:46). Jesus had apparently been living there before His public appearance to Israel.

“Baptized of John in Jordan”: Over John’s objections (Matt. 3:14), who saw no need for the sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29), to participate in a baptism of repentance (see notes on verses 4-5); for an explanation of why Jesus was baptized (see note on Matt. 3:15).

Jesus did not need to repent of sin, but as the Messiah of Israel He identified thoroughly with the people of Israel. He also would have wished to show His support for John as God’s prophet. Jesus sought this outward identification with John’s ministry “to fulfill all righteousness”. By identifying Himself with those He came to redeem, Jesus inaugurated His public ministry as the Messiah.

To some people this would seem so unusual that the Savior of the world would come to be baptized. Of course, Jesus had no sins to repent of. He was without sin. In everything, Jesus is the ultimate example. I believe this act of humbly coming to be baptized was simply an example for us to follow.

There had been very little heard of Jesus, since His trip with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. We know that He lived with His mother Mary, and Joseph, the man that the world thought was His father. Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus had worked with Joseph in the carpenter's shop.

I believe a great deal went on that we are not told about in the Scriptures in this interval, since He had been in the temple at twelve.

The statement: "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" found (in Luke 2:49), tells us that Jesus had begun His heavenly Father's business.

The fact that Mary knew that Jesus could turn water into wine at the wedding indicates to me that this was the first recorded miracle, not the first one. Jesus from the time He was twelve until the wine incident was possibly ministering, but not formally for recorded history. The Hebrew young men called to the ministry began at age thirty.

John the Baptist was a close relative of Jesus' mother, Mary. It seems that John's message had traveled far, and Nazareth was not far from the Jordan River. Jesus in prophecy, would be known

as a Nazarene and a Galilean. It is so simply stated here that Jesus was baptized of John. The baptizer is not the important thing, the baptism is.

Mark 1:10 "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

“Straightway”: In keeping with His fast-paced narrative style, Mark used this adverb more than the other 3 gospel writers combined. This first occurrence sets the stage for the audible and visible signs that followed Jesus’ baptism.

“The Spirit like a dove descending upon him”: This was most likely symbolic of Jesus’ empowerment for ministry (Isa. 61:1; see note on Matt. 3:16-17).

Mark uses a somewhat violent verb in Greek; “opened” can be rendered “being torn apart.” Jesus witnesses heaven, closed to sinners, being torn open. This signifies that God is now accessible to penitent seekers. God’s “Spirit” empowers Jesus for His coming service.

Mark 1:11 "And there came a voice from heaven, [saying], Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Along with new access to heaven (verse 10), comes new information from heaven. “Thou are” is a statement of fact. Thou is translated from an emphatic Greek personal pronoun stressing the identity of Jesus to the exclusion of all others. The force of this is, “You alone, rather than any others, are uniquely My beloved Son.”

The Father’s pronouncement would have reminded the audience of the messianic prophecies of (Psalm 2:7; Isa. 42:1).

The thing that stands out (in verses 10 and 11), more than anything else is the fullness of the God head here. We see Jesus (the second person), coming out of the water, we see the Father in the voice from heaven, and we see the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove which descended from heaven. We in fact, see Father, Son, and Holy Spirit here at the baptism.

The heaven opened lets us know that these truly were from the throne of God in heaven. Remember, Jesus was from heaven Himself. His Spirit, which is His Life, is of God. His flesh was provided by Mary.

In (verse 10), it appears that all three personalities of God were cooperating in the ministry of Jesus here on the earth. Jesus' body here, was touched by the Holy Spirit of God, as if anointing Jesus to carry out the work. Jesus' Spirit needed no renewal. His Spirit is the God Spirit, without flaw.

The Spirit of God chose to come to earth and take on the form of man, so that He might save mortal man. The "heavens opened" shows also, the involvement of all of heaven in this earthly ministry of Jesus which officially began with this baptism. The Elohim God was present here, the very one present at creation.

These three also, give us a three-fold view of approval of the baptism. First of all, the Lord Jesus was the one baptized. The voice from heaven caused us to hear God's approval; and thirdly, the dissention of the Dove gave physical evidence of God's approval.

Many people wear little dove pins proclaiming that they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This voice leaves no doubt who Jesus is. He is the Son of God. Not only is He the Son of God, but God is very pleased with His Son. Just this voice alone should have left no doubt in anyone's mind just who Jesus really is.

Mark 1:12 "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness."

“Immediately” (see note on verse 10). Jesus’ temptation came right after His baptism.

“The Spirit driveth him”: Compelled by the Spirit, Jesus confronted Satan and took the first step toward over-throwing his evil kingdom (1 John 3:8). Though God tempts no one (James 1:13), He sometimes sovereignly permits Satan to tempt His people (e.g. Job; Luke 22:31-32).

The verb “driveth” calls attention to the forcefulness of the Spirit’s urging. The “wilderness” is the desert waste of Palestine.

“The wilderness”: The exact location of Jesus’ encounter with Satan is unknown. It most likely would have been the same wilderness where John lived and ministered (see note on verse 4), the desolate region farther South, or the arid Arabian desert across the Jordan.

Mark 1:13 "And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

“Forty days”: Perhaps reminiscent of Israel’s 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (Num. 14:33; 32:13). Matthew and Luke add that Jesus went without food during this time. Moses (twice, Deut. 9:9, 18) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) also fasted for that length of time.

“Satan”: From a Hebrew word meaning “adversary.” Since He had no fallen nature, Jesus’ temptation was not an internal emotional or psychological struggle, but an external attack by a personal being.

“Wild beasts”: A detail unique to Mark’s account, stressing Jesus’ loneliness and complete isolation from other people.

The temptation is portrayed as lasting throughout the “forty days.” But so is the sustaining ministration of God’s angels. “Wild beasts” underscores the loneliness and hostility of the surroundings.

Here in Mark we see a very short statement. This is covered in detail (in Matthew 4:1-11), and again (in Luke 4:1-13). I would suggest that you read both of those accounts several times along with this to get the full message. I will touch on just one or two items here.

"The Spirit driveth him into the wilderness" is a shortened statement. The true meaning, I believe, is found in Luke:

Luke 4:1 "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,"

We see a similar statement (in Matthew 4:1), "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

We see here, a perfect example of cross references of Scriptures which interpret themselves. We see from this, that Jesus was so full of the Holy Ghost and its power, that He was led by the Spirit. It is one thing, I have said before, to be saved; but it is an entirely different thing to have Jesus as your Lord.

Jesus in this case, had totally submitted His will to the Spirit. He gladly went to be tempted of the devil. God is not a tempter. The devil tempts through the lust of the flesh. When we are tempted, it is the lust of the flesh that causes the temptation. In Jesus' case, He had no lust. The devil tried to cause Jesus to lust for the things of this world and failed.

Another point we must make here, is that the angels of God did not minister unto Jesus, until He had been tempted and overcame the temptation. Then they ministered to Jesus (Psalm 91:11-12). The tense of the Greek verb, "to minister," suggests the angels ministered to Jesus throughout His temptation.

Forty throughout the Bible, is symbolic of trials and testings. These forty days were no exception. We will find in our Christian walk that we too, have times of testing. We too must withstand the devil with the Word of God and in the name of Jesus.

In (James 4:7), we read "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are. He was first tempted in food, because He was hungry after forty days. He was tempted to tempt God and see if God would protect Him, and He was tempted to attain earthly fame. To read more in detail about this, you may read in the lessons on Matthew and Luke which deal with this same subject (in chapter 4), of both books.

Mark 1:14 "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,"

"John was put into prison"; He was incarcerated for rebuking Herod Antipas over his incestuous marriage to his niece, Herodias (see notes on 6:17-27).

"Jesus came into Galilee": From Judea (Matt. 4:12; Luke 4:13; John 4:3). Mark, along with Matthew and Luke, passes directly from the temptation to the beginning of the Galilean ministry, skipping Jesus' intervening ministry in Judea (John 2:13 – 4:4). Galilee was the northernmost region of Palestine, and the most heavily populated.

“The gospel of the kingdom of God”: The good news of salvation both about God and from Him (see note on Rom. 1:1; Rom. 15:16; 1 Thess. 2:2, 8-9; 1 Tim. 1:11, 1 Peter 4:17).

Jesus’ public ministry in “Galilee” gets underway.

Mark 1:15 "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

“The time is fulfilled”: Not time in a chronological sense, but the time for decisive action on God’s part. With the arrival of the King, a new era in God’s dealings with men had come (see note on Gal. 4:4).

“At hand”: Because the King was present.

“Repent ye, and believe”: Repentance (see note on verse 4), and faith (see note on Romans 1:16), are man’s required responses to God’s gracious offer of salvation (Acts chapters 20-21).

Jesus’ proclamation stresses the importance of that present time. The sphere of God’s sovereign rule is extending into humanity with new intensity. All, even Israel, are to repent by God’s grace, turning from sin and to righteousness, not just outwardly but with the heart.

Along with repenting must come believing, putting trust in Jesus’ message (and thus right from the start, to some extent, in Jesus Himself).

There was a gap of time here between the temptation and the time Jesus came into Galilee. This John spoken of here, is John the Baptist. He was imprisoned because he spoke out against Herod marrying his sister-in-law, Herodias. This is found (in Mark 6:18-19).

When Jesus came into any area, it was for a purpose. Here we see Him coming into Galilee, to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. The purpose of preaching is to change people, to cause them to begin again in Jesus. The "gospel" as we have said before, is good news. Believers are not like the world that has no hope. We have hope of an everlasting kingdom, if we believe in Jesus.

The kingdom of God is actually everything that exists. The whole universe is His kingdom. A really good way to say this would be that Jesus was preaching the good news that God is King of everything. And we are part of that kingdom, if we repent of our sins and make Jesus Christ Savior and Lord of our lives.

In (verse 15), "the time is fulfilled", just means that the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that Messiah will come, had happened. Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. Christians should not dread death of the body; we should look forward to the everlasting life of the Spirit.

Romans 10:9 tells us what this good news really is:

Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Mark 1:16 "Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers."

“Sea of Galilee”: Also known as the Sea of Chinnereth (Num. 34:11), the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), and the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). A large, freshwater lake about 13 miles long and 7 miles wide, and about 690 feet below sea level (making it the lowest body of fresh water on earth) “The Sea of Galilee” was home to a thriving fishing industry.

“Simon and Andrew”: The first of two sets of brothers Jesus called to follow Him. Like James and John, they were fishermen. Since Andrew had been a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:40), it is possible that Peter had been as well.

They had evidently returned to their fishing business after John’s arrest (see note on verse 14). They had already met and spent time with Jesus (see note on Matt. 4:18), but were here called to follow Him permanently.

“Net”: A rope forming a circle about 9 feet in diameter with a net attached. It could be thrown by hand into the water, then hauled in by means of the length of weighted rope attached to it.

Mark 1:17 "And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."

“Come ye after me” (or follow me): Used frequently in the gospels in reference to discipleship (2:18; 8:34; 10:21; Matt. 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21; Luke 9:23, 59, 61; 18:22; John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26).

“Fishers of men”: Evangelism was the primary purpose for which Jesus called the apostles, and it remains the central mission for His people (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

With a command Jesus summons two to be disciples. Mark may preserve here Peter’s vivid memory of this brief and direct appeal. Seen against its Old Testament background, Jesus’ call is to the task of winning men in view of the impending judgment of God.

Verses 18-20: Jesus’ call is not an enthusiastic shout of temporary appeal but a summons to all-encompassing, whole-life commitment. Jesus gains at least four dedicated adherents, who follow him to Capernaum.

Mark 1:18 "And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him."

“Followed him”: I.e., became His permanent disciples (see note on verse 16).

This again, is a very short and precise statement about the call of Simon (Peter), and Andrew to go with Jesus and be His apostles. We find this statement almost exactly like this (in Matthew 4:18-22). The most vivid description of what happened however, is found in:

Luke 5:1-4 "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret," "And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing [their] nets." "And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship." "Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

Luke 5:5-11 "And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." "And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." And they beckoned unto [their] partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." "When Simon Peter saw [it], he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." "For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:" "And so [was] also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."

Not that we need any reason for them "forsaking all, and following" Jesus, but they had just seen an overwhelming miracle, plus they had just heard Jesus preach. There would be no way that they would not follow Him.

You see, the very best way to explain a Scripture is to find a more detailed Scripture on the very same incident and let it explain it for you. Notice, that the Sea of Galilee and Lake of Gennesaret are one and the same. Peter was called by Simon also, and in one place called by both names at once, Simon Peter.

There is no further explanation necessary why they left their nets and followed Jesus. It was just because He told them to. They believed nothing was impossible to Him after seeing this miracle.

Mark Chapter 1 Continued Questions

1. Where did Jesus come from before He was baptized?
2. Who baptized Jesus?
3. Where was He baptized?
4. Why was Jesus baptized?
5. What occupation had Joseph practiced?

6. Who did the world believe was Jesus' father?
7. What age did Hebrew men begin to minister?
8. In prophecy, what two things were spoken of Jesus that indicated where He would be from?
9. When Jesus came out of the baptismal water, what descended upon Him?
10. What did it symbolize?
11. What did the voice from heaven say?
12. What does the author think stands out the most in Verses 10 and 11?
13. Tell how we saw Father, Son, and Holy Ghost at the baptism.
14. When did Jesus' ministry officially begin?
15. What one thing at Jesus' baptism should have left no doubt who He is?
16. What drove Jesus into the wilderness?
17. Why was He drawn to the wilderness?
18. How long was Jesus in the wilderness to be tempted?
19. What Scriptures in Matthew and Luke tell of this same incident?
20. What does the Scripture the spirit driveth him into the wilderness mean?
21. Who and what tempts a person to sin?
22. When we sin, what causes it?
23. The devil tried to tempt Jesus in His flesh, what happened?
24. When did the angels minister to Jesus?
25. How long did Jesus fast?
26. What number is symbolic of trials and tribulations?
27. What does James 4:7 teach us about the devil?
28. When did Jesus come into Galilee to preach?

29. What did He preach there?
30. Why had John been put in prison?
31. What is the gospel?
32. Christians should not dread death, but should _____.-
33. Who was Simon's brother?
34. What was Simon's other name?
35. What was Simon's and his brother's occupation?
36. What did Jesus call them to do?
37. In what book do we find a more detailed account of this same thing?
38. What great miracle did Jesus perform for them before He called them to the ministry?
39. Who were Simon's partners, besides his brothers?
40. Why did Simon tell Jesus to depart from him?
41. How did they, Simon and his brother, answer Jesus' call?