

Message #3

Mark 1:9-13

If the goal of your book is to show how the Gospel of Jesus Christ began, you will need to give information about the Person the Gospel is about—Jesus Christ. Mark wastes no time in getting to the heart of the action in the life of Jesus Christ.

MARK OPENS HIS GOSPEL BY RECORDING TWO KEY EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO JESUS CHRIST AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY THAT PROVES HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE SINNERS FROM THEIR SINS.

These two events do not happen to any other person other than Him. What is described in these verses is very peculiar to Him and very important to His identity.

EVENT #1 – The baptism of Jesus Christ. 1:9-11

The emphasis in the opening of the book of Mark (1:1-8) has been on John, who came out of the wilderness and had a baptism ministry that was taking place in the Jordan that was affecting people in Jerusalem and Judea (Mark 1:5). People were going out to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

However, in **verse 9**, the emphasis changes on One who comes from Nazareth of Galilee. For the most part to this point, the people were coming out from the high and mighty religious city of Jerusalem and Judea; but in sharp contrast to that, Jesus comes from a “no-where-ville village in rustic Galilee” (*Mark*, p. 47). Jesus comes from Nazareth of Galilee, a small town located in SW Galilee.

Jesus does not come on the scene with some angelic halo or aura or fanfare. He does not come from the big religious city with a fleet of limousines, followed by the paparazzi. There is no popish procession of robed Biblical scholars. There is no pomp and no circumstance.

Now John predicted that the Savior, Messiah, Son of God would show up and he would direct people to Him, but the shocking news is that He quietly came from Galilee. To this point, He had pretty much been in seclusion in Nazareth. Now most times when you are looking for a great religious, political deliverer and Savior to surface, you would ask what is His resume; where is He from and where did He go to school? Mark simply says He came from Galilee.

That is a shock in itself, but what is even more shocking is that Jesus comes from Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan. Remember John is proclaiming that I am not even worthy to touch His sandals; but what we learn here is that He was baptized by John.

Now John is the lesser and Jesus is the greater; but when John baptizes Jesus, it almost appears that John is the greater and Jesus is the lesser. This baptism is a baptism about admitting you are a sinner.

The big question here is “Why was Jesus baptized by John?”

Now John’s baptism is a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (1:4). People, who were being baptized by John, were “confessing their sins” (1:5). So why would Jesus allow Himself to be baptized by a man who admits that he is not worthy to untie His sandals? **Jesus Christ cannot sin, which is the very point of the next event.** He never did sin, so why would he be baptized in a baptism that is specifically designed to get people to admit they are sinners?

That question not only puzzles us, but it puzzled John because Matthew said that when John saw Jesus, he couldn’t figure it out either. In fact, John tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized because he realized this and said to Jesus, “I have need to be baptized by you” (Matt. 3:14).

Well, there are three answers to the question of why was Jesus baptized in John’s baptism:

Reason #1 - To fulfill all righteousness. Matthew 3:15

Jesus was born under the law and it was important for Him to be obedient to all things that were under the law. When John did not want to baptize Jesus, Jesus told him that this was to “fulfill all righteousness.”

Reason #2 - To identify Himself with sinners because He would die as a substitute for their sin. John 1:29

This was apparently one of the first things that went through John’s mind when he saw Jesus because he said, “behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” In order to fulfill all righteousness, He has to link Himself to our sinfulness. He has to take our sin and guilt on Himself. He is our only official representative who will take our sin upon Himself and then take God’s wrath upon Himself for our sin. He is the One who can give us the Righteousness of God so that Israel may have a Kingdom and we may have eternal life. He is identifying Himself with sinners in allowing Himself to be baptized by John.

Reason #3 - To nationally identify Jesus Christ as Israel’s Messiah and King. Isaiah 42:1

Isaiah predicted that God’s servant would have His Spirit upon Him. This would fit well with the fact that Mark will develop the fact that Jesus Christ is the servant of God. Also in that Isaiah text it is established that this Servant would one day bring justice to the nations. So this event would publicly identify Jesus Christ as Israel’s Messiah and King.

Now when Jesus Christ came up out of the water there were three amazing results that “immediately” occurred. I guarantee you there will never be another baptism that will feature these results.

(Result #1) - The heavens opened. 1:10a

The Greek word Mark uses means “the heavens were ripped open.” The noun “heavens” is plural, so what we may conclude is that all three heavens divided or were ripped open so that they were opened all the way to the third heaven, which is the throne of God.

This is a critical point. This is the one Person who could open up heaven and give sinners access to heaven. Actually, in a way that is more theologically accurate, this Person would enable God to have access to us.

Now Mark says that only Jesus saw this. There is no evidence that John or anyone else saw this, but Jesus did. He knew that this was the beginning of a ministry in which His work on the cross would make it possible for us to go to heaven.

(Result #2) - The Spirit visibly descended upon Jesus. 1:10b

Now do not miss what is stated here: **the Spirit is not dove-like, the way the Spirit descended on Jesus was dove-like.** What this means is that the Spirit did not “swoop down like an eagle or a falcon but comes quietly and gently like a hovering dove.”

In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God was involved in creation, but the Spirit hovering on Jesus signals that this beginning of the Gospel is the beginning of a new creation. This begins a new epoch moment in the creation of God.

Isaiah predicted that the Spirit of the LORD would rest on Jesus (Is. 11:2-4). This clearly is a moment that is identifying Jesus as the Anointed, Messiah, and Savior. Now the emphasis here is that Jesus saw the Spirit descend upon Him. We also know John saw this (John 1:32).

(Result #3) - A voice from God the Father came out of the heavens. 1:11

This was an audible voice that we know Jesus could hear because the voice is specifically addressing Him—“you are,” not “this is.” **There are three times in the life of Jesus Christ when an audible voice came out of heaven:**

- 1) It happened the first time at Christ’s baptism. **Mark 1:11**—Christ heard it; some say all heard it.
- 2) It happened the second time at Christ’s transfiguration. **Mark 9:7**—The disciples heard it.
- 3) It happened the third time just before Christ’s crucifixion. **John 12:28-33**—The crowd heard it.

All three of these episodes show that God the Father was fully supportive and completely sovereign over everything that was happening to His Son.

Now the voice communicates three messages:

(Message #1) - Jesus is God's Son. 1:11a

In Greek the language is emphatic. God the Father stresses that Jesus is His Son. The pronoun "you" is emphatic and singular and aimed straight at Jesus Christ. This statement is that Jesus is "My Son" and He is "My beloved Son." Present tense verb "are" indicates Christ is continually God and Son all the time.

It announces that this is God's precious Son who has been sent by God. God loved His Son and He was sanctioning this very episode in which His Son identified Himself with the sinful people of Israel. This is the Son, this is the Messiah, and this is the Savior.

By virtue of the fact that this voice first occurs here from heaven, we know that the first thing that must be addressed if people are to have a relationship with God is their sin issue. Remember this is a baptism in which people admit they are sinners and need forgiveness of sin. So when this voice comes out of heaven, God is basically saying I sent My only beloved Son to the world to take care of the sin problem.

(Message #2) - Jesus is God's beloved Son. 1:11b

Now by identifying Jesus as the Son whom He loves or His beloved Son, then what this teaches us is that this was a major sacrifice for God the Father to make. This beginning of the Gospel that Mark is developing meant that God the Father had to authorize the Son whom He loved to come to this world to take care of Israel's sin problem and our sin problem.

I doubt we begin to grasp the sacrifice the Father made here. He had to make a decision to let His own beloved son come to this world so Israel could be saved and so we could be saved. This is God's own beloved Son.

If you have ever had to make the decision to put an animal down that you love, you know the emotional pain and trauma of this. It has been well over 1 year since I had to put my horse Solomon down and I am still not over it. He had fallen and he could not get up. It was cold and snowy. I went and sat with him for over two hours. I just sat by his side reminiscing, thinking and crying. He would look at me with his beautiful brown eyes and if I could have done anything to save him I would have done it. But in the end I had to make the decision to put him down. It broke my heart. In fact, while I was thinking about this to use here, I was crying in my office. Now the reason I made the decision to let him die was because it was the best thing for him. That beautiful half-Arab, half-Saddlebred horse could no longer stand up. He could no longer eat, he could no longer drink and predator animals could hurt him. So at 30 years of age, my beloved horse Solomon died by my decision.

Jesus was about 30 years of age when this baptism occurred. His Father loved His Son, but the Father had to make a decision. This decision was not based on what was best for His Son; it was based on what was best for sinners. There would be moments when the Son would look up to heaven as if to say please help Me, but the Father could not.

In order for us to be saved from our sins, Jesus had to take our sin and God's wrath on Himself; and this baptism was the first major step in this process and that voice said to the people you need to know this is "my beloved Son."

(Message #3) - Jesus is God's well-pleasing Son. 1:11c

Now I think it is theologically significant to see the phrase "**in You** I am well-pleased." Aorist tense of verb "well-pleased" is constative aorist—action in entirety. God looked at His Son and was well-pleased with everything with what was "in Him." When He looks at us, He is not well-pleased with what is in us because what He sees in us is a deceitful heart and sin. But when He looked at His Son, who at this point was about 30, there was no sin in Him.

If we leave this statement in the context, God the Father was pleased with God the Son because He was willing to identify with these sinful Israelites in this baptism, which was necessary if a sinner was to be saved from sin.

This is critical to see because the reason why Jesus Christ will die is not because He was a failure or displeased God. In fact, it is just the opposite; what He was willing to do was well-pleasing to God because this is what will make it possible for sinners to be saved from their sins.

Now many people have built water baptism cases on this scene. They say we follow the Lord in water baptism of immersion because of what happened here. Well, there are some things we would like to point out because I do not believe any of us follow this baptism of Jesus Christ.

Observation #1 - Christ did not receive the Holy Spirit until after He had been baptized.

In what we would call believer's N.T. baptism we are publicly saying we have believed on Jesus Christ and received the Spirit of God.

Observation #2 - Christ had not sinned when He was baptized.

The point of any other baptism is that the person has sinned and has received a judicial cleansing by faith in Jesus Christ.

Observation #3 - Our baptisms do not feature heaven opened.

Observation #4 - Our baptisms do not feature God speaking from heaven.

Observation #5 - Our baptisms do not feature a visible descent of the Holy Spirit.

This was a very unique baptism totally connected to Jesus Christ.

EVENT #2 – The temptation of Jesus Christ. **1:12-13**

Now Mark moves immediately to the Temptation of Jesus Christ.

There are seven facts he presents about this episode:

Fact #1 - The temptation occurred immediately after Christ's baptism. **1:12a**

The importance of this chronologically is that it will prove that Jesus is sinless and therefore is able to judicially take our sin on Himself.

Fact #2 - The temptation was Spirit-led. **1:12b**

We could understand Mark's language to mean this temptation was "Spirit-driven." The word "impel" in Greek means to drive out or cast out. This was a Spirit-controlled temptation. Jesus, who is identified as the beloved Son of God, was following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Now this does show us the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit. We need His guidance and partnership in everything we do.

However, this temptation is totally different than any temptation we face. When we are tempted we are tempted by our own flesh lusts. Jesus' flesh could not tempt Him because He did not have a sin nature. This was the point of this Spirit-led event.

Fact #3 - The temptation took place in the wilderness. **1:12c**

This was private and intimidating. When you are alone in the wilderness, it is intimidating. But there is much more to this than just these facts. The truth is the wilderness was the very place where Israel failed and in the wilderness world it is where we fail. But Jesus would not fail. This would make Him the perfect representative for Israel and us.

Fact #4 - The temptation lasted 40 days. **1:13a**

This was not a one night camp out in the wilderness. This was a 40 day period of time. Matthew adds that Christ fasted (Matt. 4:2), and Mark does not. This again is an important number for Israel. The spies had spied out God's promised land for 40 days and Israel refused to obey God and had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (Num. 14:34). This 40 day period shows this is the One who can fulfill all of Israel's promises.

Fact #5 - The temptation featured the presence of Satan. **1:13b**

Now Matthew and Luke bring out three different temptations, but Mark simply focuses in on the fact that the temptation was satanic. Satan was literally and personally at this temptation. Satan knew who Jesus was. He knew He was God's beloved Son.

During the temptation Satan came at Jesus from different angles, trying to get Him to take the easy way out and turn away from a focus on God's Word and will.

In each of the three main temptations, Jesus used the written Word of God (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10) to defeat the devil and finally the devil left him (Matt. 4:11).

Fact #6 - The temptation featured wild beasts. **1:13c**

Just as God had delivered Daniel from the lions, God protected His Son from all kinds of predator animals. Also this does show that this One had an Eden relationship with the animals. Jesus had total power over the beasts. They could not harm Him. Now in Rome, beasts were used to kill Christians; but what this showed is that Jesus was even in sovereign control of the wild beasts.

Fact #7 - The temptation featured angels who ministered to Christ. **1:13d**

Now angels had a very unique relationship to Jesus Christ. They protected Him and provided for Him.

What all of this proves is that Jesus Christ is the Only God-Messiah-Savior.