

The Gospel of *Mark*

The Servant Leadership of Jesus

The Presentation of the Servant (1:1-13)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way (1:1-8)

1 The first verse is Mark's title for his Gospel (*euaggelion* : good news) about Jesus (Greek form of Hebrew word, *Yehoshua* : the Lord is salvation, translated Joshua in OT) the Christ (*Christos*, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, *Mâshîyach* : anointed one, translated Messiah in OT & NT), which indicates Jesus was the expected Jewish Savior. The phrase "Son of God" was included to affirm the deity of Jesus ^{Matthew 4:3} and to emphasize His intimate relationship with God the Father.

In writing to the Corinthian church, Paul gave a good Gospel description ^{1 Corinthians 15:1-8}.

2-3 Mark's book has few OT quotes, but he chose to begin with 2 quotes describing John the Baptist: from Malachi ^{v.2 from Malachi 3:1} (also included in the other synoptic Gospels ^{Matthew 11:10, Luke 7:27}) and from Isaiah ^{v.3 from Isaiah 40:3} (which appears in all four of the Gospels ^{Matthew 3:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23}).

4 John (*the Lord is gracious*) was named by the angel Gabriel through his father, Zacharias ^{Luke 1:13}. The quotes ^{v.2,3} pictured him as the prophesied messenger sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. John's ministry provided people with "the knowledge of salvation through forgiveness" ^{Luke 1:76-77} through baptism (*baptizō* : to immerse) and the preaching of repentance for forgiveness ^{Luke 3:3}.

Hundreds of years earlier, baptism described the process of submerging cloth into a dye in order to change its color (or identity). Through immersion in water and the Holy Spirit, the baptisms by John and Jesus ^{Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5} change the identity of people ^{2 Corinthians 5:17}.

5 After more than 400 years without a prophetic voice (not since Malachi in c.425 B.C.), the people were spiritually ready to respond to John's ministry, so they came to him in great numbers in order to confess their sins, to express their repentance and to be baptized by John in the Jordan River. So many were going to John that the Jewish leaders sent priests & Levites to question him ^{John 1:19}.

6 John's clothes of "camel's hair" with a "leather belt" were rugged (similar to Elijah's ^{2 Kings 1:7-8}) and appropriate for wilderness living (the desolate area west of the Dead Sea, symbolic of the

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spiritual wasteland of the Jewish people). In keeping with being a Nazirite^{Numbers 6:1-13, Luke 1:15}, John's diet was restrictive, so he ate appropriate wilderness food^{Deuteronomy 32:13-14}.

Surprisingly, the strict dietary aspects of the Mosaic Law allowed locust eating^{Leviticus 11:20-23}.

7-8 John obediently preached his message (*kērussō* : proclaimed) of humility^{John 3:25-30, Acts 13:25} in his charge as the announcer of the Christ, who is infinitely more powerful and worthy than John. John also contrasted his water baptism of repentance with the ultimate baptism of the Holy Spirit which was to be brought by Jesus, the Messiah^{Acts 1:5}, and prophesied in the OT^{Isaiah 44:3, Joel 2:28}.

As God, through the first Jesus (Joshua, Jesus in Hebrew), called His people into the physical inheritance of the Promised Land^{Joshua 1:6}, He was at that time, having John call His people into their spiritual inheritance of the Kingdom through the second Jesus (Christ)^{1 Peter 1:3-5}.

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus (1:9-13)

9 Mark's first mention of Jesus was His going from Nazareth (an obscure village^{John 1:46} in Galilee 70 miles north of Jerusalem) to John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Even though John expressed objections^{Matthew 3:14} (probably because he knew Jesus was sinless^{John 1:29}), John baptized Jesus.

Nazareth was not mentioned in the OT, or in the Talmud, or in the writings of Josephus.

Jesus instructed John he must baptize Him in order to "fulfill all righteousness."^{Matthew 3:15} In saying this, the sinless Jesus was: (1) displaying His first public identification with the sinners he would be saving^{Isaiah 53:11-12, 1 Peter 3:18}, (2) carrying out a symbolic act of His death and resurrection^{Luke 12:50} and (3) placing great significance on Christian baptism^{Acts 8:36-38}.

10-11 As Jesus was coming out of the water, heaven opened up^{Revelation 4:1, 19:11} and the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in the likeness of a dove^{John 1:32}, symbolizing the Father's anointing of Jesus for His earthly ministry^{Isaiah 61:1-2a}. God the Father's words of love^{Matthew 3:17}, affirming Jesus as the Son of God, were prophesied in the OT^{Psalms 2:7, Isaiah 42:1}. These verses illustrate the working together of the Trinity^{Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:1-2}: God the Father was referred to as the "voice from heaven", God the Son as "my Son" and God the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit".

Later, at the mount of Transfiguration, the "voice from heaven" repeated the words^{Mark 9:7}.

12-13 "At once" (*ēthus* : immediately – used often to emphasize the action perspective of Mark) the Holy Spirit directed Jesus into the desert for 40 days, where He faced three temptations ^{Hebrews 4:15}. Jesus, however, rebuked the devil by quoting Scripture from the book of Deuteronomy ^{Matthew 4:1-11}. Jesus spent His wilderness time with the animals He created, because of His isolation from people. Angels ministered to Jesus, just as they did in Gethsemane ^{Luke 22:43} and do for believers ^{Hebrews 1:14}.

Joshua led God's people into their land inheritance after forty years of wilderness testing.

Jesus' test for 40 days resulted in His leading others into their spiritual inheritance ^{1 Peter 1:3-5}.

Satan's temptation techniques are lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and pride of life ^{Genesis 3:1-6}.

The Servant's Ministry in and around Galilee (1:14 – 9:50)

A Period of Popularity: *The First Disciples are Called* (1:14-20)

14-15 John the Baptist was imprisoned for rebuking Herod Antipas for his inappropriate marriage to his brother's wife, Herodias ^{Mark 6:17-18}. John had predicted his Godly role would decline, while Jesus' ministry would increase ^{John 3:30}. Mark's account skips over Jesus' Judean ministry ^{John 3:13-4:4}, and transitions to His ministry of the "good news" ^{v.1} in Galilee ^{Matthew 4:23}. Jesus continued to proclaim John's emphasis on repentance, while also announcing the closeness of the Kingdom of God, represented by Jesus and the eternal life He came to offer ^{John 3:14-16} by faith ^{Acts 20:21}.

16-18 While walking "beside" the Sea of Galilee (also known as the Sea of Kinnereth ^{Numbers 34:11}, the Lake of Gennesaret ^{Luke 5:1} and the Sea of Tiberias ^{John 6:1}), Jesus saw two brothers who were fishermen, Simon (Peter ^{John 1:40-42}) and Andrew, casting their nets to fish. Jesus then called to the brothers to "follow" Him and become evangelists ("fishers of men" ^{Matthew 4:19}). In response to Jesus' call (and probably convicted by the Spirit), they obediently/immediately followed ^{Matthew 4:20}.

19-20 As Jesus continued on His walk down the shoreline, He saw two other brothers, James & John (the sons of Zebedee), who were working on their fishing gear. He "called them" and they left their father, his crew and their boat to also obediently and immediately follow Jesus ^{Matthew 4:22}.

Mark indicated James & John were not poor fishermen, because their family had hired hands.

As many as seven of the twelve original apostles may have formerly been fishermen ^{John 21:1-3}.