

LIFE OF A SERVANT**Preparing the Way****Mark 1:1–13**

“The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God” Mark 1:1

Day 1: Read Mark 1:1–4.

1. The word “gospel” evolved from Old English “godspel,” or “good news,” which translates the Greek. The word “Christ” is from the Greek “Christos,” a translation of the Hebrew for “Messiah.” With these word substitutions, restate verse 1 and see if you catch a flavor for the upcoming chapters.
2. Mark immediately jumps into the Old Testament in verses 2 and 3. What does that suggest to you about the importance of these older Scriptures as a backdrop for understanding New Testament teachings about Jesus?
3. Passages from two separate Old Testament prophets (Malachi and Isaiah) are combined in Mark 1:2–3. What does this creative mixing of Old Testament references suggest about the extent of the Old Testament’s testimony to Christ? (See Luke 24:27, 44–46.)

Day 2: Read Malachi 3:1–5; 4; Isaiah 40:1–5.

4. These Old Testament passages give an amplified picture of Mark’s quotations in verses 2 and 3, and a feel for the spiritual contexts of these prophecies. Where do you see both solemn warning and joyous hope?
5. You know something the ancient Hebrews didn’t. To whose coming is the prophet referring in Isaiah 40:3–5?
6. “Make straight paths for him” (vs. 3b) is a picture of clearing obstacles out of the road to prepare a processional highway for the visit of a monarch. Why is John’s announcement appropriate for the coming of Christ? (Mark 15:2)

Day 3: Read Mark 1:4–8.

7. There was some confusion during Jesus’ time as to whether John the Baptist was really Elijah returned. (Mark 9:11–13) For one thing, the two had the same tailor. (1:6; 2 Kings 1:8) Also, Elijah had never died. (2 Kings 2:11) In what sense can the Baptist be identified with Elijah? (Malachi 4:5–6; Luke 1:16–17)

8. If you were a space alien reading chapter 1 with no previous knowledge of mankind or of the Old Testament, what would be the first hints in this passage that there is a problem with the human race? Pick out telltale words.
9. How does John tell men of the ancient Middle East to approach God? (vs.4) Is that still the way we come to Him 2,000 years later in America? Why? What hasn't changed about man? About God?

Day 4: Read Mark 1:9–12.

10. Mark's gospel doesn't mention John's little misunderstanding regarding the necessity for Jesus' baptism. (See Matt.3:13–15) What was John's problem? What do you understand by Jesus' answer about why he insists on undergoing the baptism of sinners? (See also Hebrews 2:14–17.)
11. How is each person of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, seen as participating in Jesus' mission for our salvation? (verses 10 and 11)
12. Apparently, even no less than the Son of God benefited from hearing confirming and encouraging words of love from the Father as he embarked on his life's work. (vss.10–11) What does this suggest about our own needs, both with respect to God and to one another?

Day 5: Read Mark 1:9–13.

13. What is the first thing the Spirit leads Jesus to after his baptism? (vss.12–13) Why do you think he does that? Has God ever led you into that place? What is the same about your experience with temptation? What is different? (Hebrews 2:18)
14. Mark does not go into detail about Jesus' 40 days of vanquishing temptation in the wilderness. Why does Jesus need to undergo this trial? Whose botched 40 years must he atone for in this way? (Hebrews 3:16–17)
15. The first Adam (Genesis 1–3) was tested by God in a beautiful botanical garden filled with placid animals. Into what kind of world is the "second Adam" (1 Cor.15:45) born for his testing? (1:12–13)
16. Read Matthew 4:1–11. What did Jesus use to resist temptation? How is this an encouragement to you as you start your study of Mark? (Eph. 6:17)