

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KING

A Study of the Gospel According to Mark

Mark 1:1–13

Holy Bible, New International Version ©2011

"The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." Mark 1:1

Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your heart to his word.

Read through this week's passage and jot down some thoughts and questions you may have.

Read Mark 1:1–4.

1. Mark begins his gospel ("good news") by identifying "Jesus the Messiah" as the "Son of God" (v. 1). What is the significance of this title? (John 5:18)


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."

2. In verses 2–3 Mark refers to the words of two Old Testament prophets—Malachi and Isaiah. What truth about Jesus do you think Mark is trying to impress upon his readers? (Luke 24:27, 44–46)
3. Read Malachi 3:1–5; 4:5–6 and Isaiah 40:1–5 for the fuller spiritual contexts of the prophecies Mark quotes in verses 2 and 3.
 - a. What solemn warnings are given?
 - b. What joyous hope is offered?

Nazarite: Someone separated and consecrated to God.

Numbers 6 describes the vow taken by a man or woman to become a Nazarite. It is marked by avoiding cutting of hair, consuming wine or grapes and coming in contact with dead bodies. Some people were lifelong Nazarites such as Samson (Judges 13–16) and John the Baptist.

This is not to be confused with "Nazarene" which is someone from the City of Nazareth (including Jesus).¹

4. "Make straight paths for him" (v. 3b) suggests the clearing of obstacles from the road to prepare a processional highway for the visit of a monarch. Why is this image from Isaiah 40:3 appropriate for the coming of Christ? (Mark 15:2;  John 12:12–15)

Read Mark 1:4–8.

5. What is John the Baptist, God's "messenger" (v. 2), preaching? (v. 4)
6. How does repentance "make a straight path" for Jesus' coming?

7. What is the remarkable response to John's preaching? (v. 5)

8. What makes John's message in verses 7 and 8 so exciting?

Read Mark 1:9–13.

9. How is each person of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, seen as participating in Jesus' mission for our salvation? (vv. 10–11)

10. Apparently, even the very Son of God benefited from hearing confirming and encouraging words of love from the Father as He embarked on His life's work (vv. 10–11). What does this suggest about our own needs, both with respect to God and to one another?

11. "At once" after Jesus' baptism, "the Spirit [sends] him out into the wilderness" (v. 12). Why do you think the Spirit does that?

12. In verse 13, Mark gives us only a few details about Jesus' time in the wilderness. From his description...
...what was difficult for Jesus?


...how did God care for Him?

13. How does God care for you when you suffer temptation? (Consider Hebrews 2:18; 4:15–16; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:10–18.)

Baptism

Ancient people, especially Jews, were very familiar with the idea of ritual washing. However, baptism was a very special ceremony reserved for Gentiles converting to Judaism. By it, the convert was demonstrating complete "washing away" of their past and the beginning of a new life as a Jew. John's proclamation of a "baptism of repentance" to his fellow Jews was a very bold order!²

This lesson on Mark's Gospel is adapted from "Life of a Servant" by New Life Glenside Women's Bible Study, 2002–2003.

* indicates the passage is for further study.

¹*The ESV Study Bible*, with notes by Gordon J. Wenham, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 272–274 (highlight on Numbers 6:1–21).

² Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, editors. *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 73.