

January 6th, 2019
"The Kingdom of God is at Hand"
Mark 1:1-15

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Dec 30	Revelation 17-19	Jan 3	Genesis 8-11
Dec 31	Revelation 20-22	Jan 4	Genesis 12-15
Jan 1	Genesis 1-3	Jan 5	Genesis 16-18
Jan 2	Genesis 4-7	Jan 6	Genesis 19-21

Lesson Introduction: This week we begin our six-month journey through the Gospel of Mark. Coming out of Isaiah, where so much prophecy about the coming of Christ can be found, it seems fitting that we would now dive into the life of Jesus Himself. Christ is the cornerstone of our faith (**Colossians 1:15-18, Ephesians 2:19-22, Hebrews 12:1-3**), and we would do well to focus our attention on Him every minute of every day, that we might be conformed more to His image, which is the goal of the Christian life (**Romans 8:29**). While all Scripture points to Christ, it is important that we as a church spend some concerted time looking at the life and ministry of Jesus up close, by examining who He is, and what His earthly life was all about. As we go, our hope is that lives will be transformed as we gaze upon the glory of Christ week by week (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

Our first passage in this study wastes no time at getting to the point. From the very first verse, we see that Mark wants His readers to know who Jesus really is, and what His coming to earth was all about. As we study these first few verses, we will consider **Who Jesus is: God and Man, and What Jesus Brought to Earth: Good News from the Kingdom of God.**

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- Jesus is the promised Messiah (V. 1-11, 14-15)
- Jesus is one with the Father and the Spirit (V. 10-11)
- Jesus came as a man (V. 12-13)
- Christ is the Gospel (V. 1, 14-15)

Key Memory Verses: Mark 1:15

Mark 1:1-15

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

*"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
 who will prepare your way,*

3 *the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
 'Prepare the way of the Lord,
 make his paths straight,'"*

4 *John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

9 *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

12 *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.*

14 *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

Discussion Section 1: Who Jesus is: God and Man (1-15)

-What do we learn about Jesus in the very first sentence of this book?

-In what ways do we see Jesus' deity expressed throughout the passage?

Note: *The way Mark begins this book is indicative of the rest of His writing throughout the entire gospel. We will see as we go how Mark writes with a sense of urgency as he highlights the events of the life of Christ. It is clear in*

the first several verses, that Mark has a point that he wants to get across. Theologian and author Timothy Keller, in His book "Jesus The King," says this concerning the first three verses of the gospel of Mark:

"Mark wastes no time in establishing the identity of his subject. He abruptly and bluntly asserts that Jesus is the "Christ" and the "Son of God." Christos was a Greek word meaning "an anointed royal figure." It was another way of referring to the "Messiah," the one who would come and administer God's rule on earth, and rescue Israel from all its oppressors and troubles. Not just a king, but The King. But Mark does not just call Jesus the "Christ"; he goes further. "Son of God" is an astonishingly bold term that goes beyond the popular understanding of the Messiah at the time. It is a claim of outright divinity. Mark then raises the stakes... and makes the ultimate claim. By quoting Isaiah's prophetic passage, Mark asserts that John the Baptist is the fulfillment of the "voice" calling out in the desert. Since Mark equates John with the one who would "prepare the way of the Lord," by clear inference it means that he is equating Jesus with the Lord himself, with God Almighty. The Lord God; the long-awaited divine King who would rescue his people; and Jesus – they are somehow one and the same person."

Throughout this passage, we continue to see the deity of Jesus displayed. In His baptism we see the LORD himself open the skies and proclaim, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased," as the Holy Spirit descends on Him like a dove. This is a beautiful picture of the Trinity, Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, in perfect unity with one another, just as they have always been (John 1:1-5; 17:5). It is clear from this passage, and many others throughout Scripture that Jesus was no ordinary man, Rather, He was God in flesh!

-How do we see the human side of Christ displayed in this passage?

-Why does Mark point out that Jesus was **"with the wild animals"** while He was being tempted in the wilderness?

Note: Amazingly, in a passage full of statements regarding the deity of Jesus, we get a quick snapshot into His humanity as well (see **Matthew 4:1-11** for a more detailed account of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness). We see in **verse 12** that **"The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness."** The Spirit's activity in **verse 12** indicates that it was the will of

God for Christ to go and suffer in the wilderness, being tempted as He fasted. Why would the Spirit lead Christ to this difficult place? It seems clear that it was to show that Christ would walk the same road we walk in this life, all the way to Calvary. Seeing that Christ could be tempted shows us that, while He was fully God, He was also fully man. **Hebrews 4:15** reminds us that our High Priest (Jesus Christ) is able to empathize with our weaknesses, because, **"in every respect (He) has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."** For Christ to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins, it was necessary for Him to walk in the flesh, in order that He might defeat sin in the flesh (**Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:14-17**).

Toward the end of this short section of Scripture, Mark notes that Jesus "was with the wild animals." This seems like an odd note, yet we know that every single word of Scripture is intentional. Most scholars believe that the Gospel of Mark was written in a time when Christians were facing much persecution from the Roman government. As we know from secular history, during times like this, Christians faced some horrific circumstances, some even being thrown into pits where wild animals such as lions waited to devour them. It is thought by many that Mark's note about the wild animals was meant to serve as an encouragement to persecuted Christians, that Christ has walked in their shoes, and empathizes with them.

Discussion Section 2: What Jesus Brought to Earth: Good News from the Kingdom of God (V. 1, 15)

-What does the word **"gospel"** mean?

-Why did Christ come to earth?

Note: Finally, we see Jesus proclaiming in **V. 15**, **"the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."** This word "gospel" is used both at the beginning and the end of our chapter. The word means "good news," or "news that brings joy." In Mark's time, it would have been a word attached to, "an announcement of something that has happened in history, something that's been done for you, that changes your status forever" (**Keller**). Mark begins his book by calling it **"the gospel of Jesus Christ,"** and closes the section by showing us Christ proclaiming the good news. The good news is this... Christ, the God-Man, has come. Anyone who repents and believes on Him will be forgiven, shaped into His likeness, and gain access into the kingdom of God. What glorious news it is!