



2: Preparing the Way for Yahweh (Mark 1:1-11)

John the Baptist came preparing the way for Yahweh—but when Yahweh arrived, He was fully human, standing among sinners and stepping into the waters of baptism. Join us as we discover what Mark reveals about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and how His arrival calls us to turn from sin, trust the Son, and tell the good news.

beourguest

Thanks so much for joining us today! Please register with our **CONNECT CARD**.

- Use our **WI-FI: Worship Center Guest**

getourapp

Download our **CHURCH APP** for sermons & notes, ways to connect, upcoming events, online giving, & more.



APP & NOTES



CONNECT CARD



GIVE

teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) and LSB (Legacy Study Bible)

Mark is the man believed from the earliest days of Christianity to have written this Gospel.

☀ The 4th-century church historian **Eusebius** preserved what **Papias** wrote about **Mark**:

*"Mark, having become **the interpreter of Peter**, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ." - Papias¹*

Mark 1:1 CSB

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

"The Gospel"—the **GOOD NEWS**—becomes one of Mark's characteristic words. *Although Mark is the shortest Gospel, it uses the Greek noun for "gospel" more than Matthew, Luke, and John combined. Further, the Greek term for "gospel" or "good news" is a term quite frequently used with the birth or major success of a Roman emperor.*²

JESUS CHRIST

Christ is NOT the last name of Jesus, it is a **TITLE** referring to **God's anointed** - from the Greek translation of the Hebrew term "**messiah**".

SON OF GOD

Calling an emperor a god or **a son of a god** was the norm during this time.

☀ *Inscription about the Roman Emperor Octavian (aka "**Augustus Caesar**" - Emperor at the birth of Jesus) dates from 9 BC says: "Because providence has ordered our life in a divine way ... and since the Emperor through his epiphany has exceeded the hopes of former **good news** (εὐαγγέλια), surpassing not only the benefactors who came before him, but also leaving no hope that anyone in the future will surpass him, and since the birthday of **the god** was for the world the beginning of his **good news** [may it therefore be decreed that]...."*

Mark is likely writing to people living in the Roman world who knew what it meant to hear Caesar presented as divine. Augustus called himself *Divi Filius*—"son of a god." Rome announced "good news" about its emperors and celebrated Caesar as a savior.

☀ A statue base honoring Augustus reads:

*"**Divine Augustus Caesar, son of a god**, imperator of land and sea, the benefactor and **savior of the whole world**."³*

Mark opens his Gospel saying: "You want **GOOD NEWS**? Let me tell you the real **GOOD NEWS**. You want to know the true **SON OF GOD**? His name isn't Caesar. His name is **JESUS**." **Jesus does what Caesar could never do**. Jesus heals, forgives sins, delivers from evil, and says that the Son of Man came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Mark 1:2-3 CSB

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: See, I am sending My messenger ahead of You; he will prepare Your way.
A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: **Prepare the way for the Lord**; make His paths straight!

This is a combination from both Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3-5.

¹ quoted by Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.39

² Ben Witherington III, The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 68–69.

³ catalogued as IGR III 719, found at Andriake, the harbor of ancient Myra

Malachi 3:1 LSB “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And **the Lord**, whom you seek, will suddenly **come to His temple**; and **the Messenger** of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, **He is coming**,” says Yahweh of hosts.

The 1st messenger is preparing the way for “**the Messenger of the covenant**”, Who also is referred to as **the Lord** (Hebrew **Adon**).

Isaiah 40:3-5 LSB A voice is calling, “**Prepare the way for Yahweh** in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert **a highway for our God**. “Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then **the glory of Yahweh will be revealed**, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.”

Who is this **voice in the wilderness** preparing the way for? **Yahweh!** He’s making **a highway for our God**. What comes after this messenger’s voice will reveal **the glory of Yahweh!**

This messenger was to be...**the prophet Elijah**, who lived around 850 BC and was taken to heaven while alive.

Malachi 4:5-6 LSB Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet **before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh**. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land, devoting it to destruction.”

Mark 1:4-5 CSB

John came baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and **they were baptized by him** in the Jordan River, **confessing their sins**.

They were baptized by John—and *that was highly unusual*. Jewish people were familiar with ceremonial immersion in a *mikveh*, but those washings were normally **self-administered** and repeated whenever ritual cleansing was necessary (e.g. before entering the temple courtyard).

But John’s baptism was different. He called Jewish people to submit to a baptism of repentance, preparing for God’s coming kingdom. Being Jewish was not enough: **everyone needed repentance, cleansing, and readiness for what God was about to do**.

Repentance is a genuine desire to TURN from sin and RETURN to God’s Presence. John’s baptism of Jewish people was super significant as this PROPHET tells the people to PREPARE themselves for Yahweh’s visitation. And the people showed up in droves, **confessing their sins**.

Mark 1:6 CSB

John wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

John’s father was a priest, but rather than wear priestly clothes, John lived as a in the wilderness, *wearing strange clothes* and *eating strange things*. **Camel’s hair** could be woven into a thick, rough cloth that was essentially waterproof, along with a **leather belt** (reminiscent of the OT prophet Elijah - 2 Kings 1:8). **Locusts and wild honey** were staple foods for those living in the desert.⁴ Yahweh allowed His people to eat locusts during their journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land (Lev 11:21-22).

John the Baptist would have been seen as having a ministry similar to the Old Testament prophet, **Elijah**, as Jesus later affirms (Mt 11:14, 17:9-13).

Mark 1:7-8 CSB

He proclaimed, “**One who is more powerful than I am is coming after me**. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but **he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit**.”

John wanted everyone to know that the **ONE** he spoke of was *MUCH MORE IMPORTANT* than he was. **John was the herald, but the One coming was the King**. John was the messenger; the One coming was the message. John felt *UNWORTHY* to even **untie His sandals** - the job of a servant. John baptized on the OUTSIDE - **with water**. The One coming would baptize on the INSIDE...**with the Holy Spirit**.

Mark 1:9 CSB

In those days **Jesus** came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.

Mark’s Gospel makes this story short and sweet, but we know that John the Baptist wasn’t quick to baptize Jesus.

Matthew 3:13-15 CSB Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. But **John tried to stop him**, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?” Jesus answered him, “**Allow it** for now, because **this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness**.” Then John allowed him to be baptized.

If John wasn’t worthy to remove his sandals as a servant would (Mt 3:11), then he certainly wasn’t worthy to baptize Jesus, and that’s what he recognizes when he says, “**I need to be baptized by you**.”

⁴ Michael J. Wilkins, Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 133–134.

So, why did Jesus need to be baptized?

To fulfill all righteousness.

- **Jesus is obeying the Father's will**, even willing to go to the cross.
- **Jesus validates the ministry of John the Baptist**. John is not a rogue rabbi. John is a great prophet, whom God had sent to prepare the way of the Lord!
- **Jesus was identifying with sinners**. Rather than standing far away from sinful people, he was right in the midst of them, *The Savior was standing, walking, and living among those He came to save.*
- **Jesus wasn't baptized because He needed to repent and be forgiven**. Jesus was about to begin the journey that would end up with Him doing all it took **to fulfill all righteousness** - what baptism later became a picture of - Jesus DYING - being BURIED - and RISING from the dead! (Rm 6:3-4, Col 2:11-13, 1 Pet 3:18-22)

☀ **Leon Morris**: *Jesus might well have been up there in front standing with John and calling on sinners to repent. Instead he was down there with the sinners, affirming his solidarity with them, making himself one with them in the process of the salvation that he would in due course accomplish.*⁵

Mark 1:10-11 CSB

As soon as **He** came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and **the Spirit** descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "**You are My beloved Son**; with you I am well-pleased."

The heavens being torn open is biblical language referring to communication & interaction between God and His people (Is 64:1, Ezek 1:1, Jn 1:51, Acts 7:56).

John saw **the Spirit of God** was **descending like a dove**, resting on Jesus. Just as kings were anointed with oil - a symbol of the presence of God's Spirit, it now becomes obvious to the Baptizer that **Jesus is the anointed, Spirit-led, Messiah-King** who John has come to announce.

Here we see the *Trinity* of the ONE TRUE GOD revealed - **Father** speaking from heaven, **Son** being baptized, & **Spirit** empowering the Son.

You are my beloved Son. From this one phrase we learn both **the identity of Jesus** and **the mission of Jesus** as this reminds us of 2 Old Testament messianic passages, Ps 2:7 and Is 42:1.

Psalms 2:6-7 CSB "I have installed My king on Zion, My holy mountain." I will declare the Lord's decree. He said to me, "**You are My Son**; today I have become **your Father**."

Isaiah 42:1 CSB This is **My servant**; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I **have put my Spirit on him**; he will bring justice to the nations.

NOBODY standing on the banks of the Jordan River, with the exception of God the Son, God the Father, and God the Spirit, knew what the baptism of Jesus would later come to represent throughout the ages - the **DEATH, BURIAL**, and **RESURRECTION** of Jesus



► Turn from sin.

Have you genuinely *repented* of sin - *turned FROM sin* and *turned TO Jesus*?

► Trust the Son.

We should be His humble servants, wanting to make much of Him, grateful for His forgiveness!

► Tell the good news.

We should *SHARE* that message with others, calling them to turn from sin and turn to Jesus, before it's too late.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives**: **Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

⁵ Morris, Matthew, 65.

Discussion questions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. What truth, statement, or image from this teaching stood out to you most? Why?
2. Mark introduces Jesus as **"Jesus Christ, the Son of God."** What does each of these titles reveal about who Jesus is?
3. The Roman world announced "good news" about Caesar and called the emperor divine, a son of a god, and a savior. How does that background strengthen Mark's claim that the true good news is about Jesus?
4. Isaiah said that a messenger would **"prepare the way for Yahweh."** John prepared the way, and then Jesus appeared. What does this reveal about the identity of Jesus?
5. What is the difference between feeling sorry about sin and genuinely repenting of sin? What might true repentance look like in someone's life?
6. John was the herald, but Jesus was the King. **John was the messenger; Jesus was the message.** How did John's words and actions consistently point attention away from himself and toward Jesus?
7. John said he was unworthy even to untie Jesus' sandals. What can John teach us about humility and our role as servants of Jesus?
8. John baptized people with water, but Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. What can Jesus accomplish within us that no human teacher, religious ritual, or external ceremony can accomplish?
9. Jesus was sinless, so why did He submit to John's baptism? Consider His obedience to the Father, His identification with sinners, His affirmation of John's ministry, and His journey toward the cross.
10. At Jesus' baptism, the Son was in the water, the Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father spoke from heaven. What does this scene teach us about Jesus and the triune nature of God?
11. Consider the three responses from the conclusion: **Turn from sin. Trust the Son. Tell the good news.** Which one is God particularly calling you to act upon this week? What practical step will you take?