

## **Mark 1:1-15 “The Beginning of the Gospel”**

As we begin our study through the Gospel of Mark I wanted to give you a little information. It is believed that this is the first written Gospel of the four that we have and it is one of the three gospels that we call the synoptic gospels. If you read through Matthew and Luke you will find that many of the same narratives of the life of Jesus are found in the three of them. The Gospel of John is a whole different narrative with many accounts that are not found in the other gospels.

The exact date of the writing of the Gospel of Mark is widely debated and scholars actually have a wide range of dates that are given that run from around 52 AD all the way to 70 AD or perhaps a bit later.

I might mention that the Gospels all focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and as they do so they all give a different perspective. Some will look at the gospels and they see that there are some differences in the way that certain narratives are presented and they will go so far as to say these accounts contradict each other. However I would say that a careful examination of the Gospel accounts makes things easily understood if you put the different pieces together.

Actually it makes perfect sense that the gospels see things from different angles and if you think about it if you and I were to be at the intersection of a busy street and there was a car crash that took place right in front of us we may have very different conclusions and observations about how things transpired. One of us may provide the detail that there was actually a bicycle that was passing through causing a distraction to the drivers involved, while another of us may have been very focused on the color of the car in the crash or the fact

that someone ran a red light. The reality is any event that is observed by multiple witnesses will always have different things that are focused on.

I believe it is the same with the Gospels as each one gives a slightly different perspective as the writer looked to portray Jesus in a different light. The gospel of Matthew as it was written was written from the perspective of the Jewish people, thus we see that there is a heavy emphasis on Jesus fulfilling scripture, it also focuses on the fact that Jesus is King. The gospel of Luke is written to show the world that Jesus is the Son of Man. The gospel of John was written to prove that Jesus was the Son of God and then the gospel of Mark was written to show us the Servanthood of Jesus.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark you will see that Jesus was on the move constantly, He was busy, the book uses the word immediately at least 35 times. The rapid pace of the narrative actually makes sense when you understand that it was written to those who were living in the Roman world...You see the Roman world was a lot like our country that we live in today. The Romans were task driven individuals, they wanted to accomplish things and they wanted to do so as quickly and efficiently as possible...So Jesus being busy and seeing so much accomplished through His life would have spoken to them.

Now let's talk about the writer of this gospel whose name was Mark but he is also known as John Mark. Scholars are almost unanimous in his authorship and as we look at the scriptures we actually learn quite a bit about this young man. He is first seen in the book of Acts 12:12 and this was when Peter was in prison and there was a house church that was gathered praying for his release...Acts 12:12 says this of

Peter after he was miraculously released from prison when it says

**<sup>12</sup> So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.** This family was probably wealthy as the church would have had to have a large place to gather.

Over in Colossians 4:10 we learn that Mark was actually the cousin of Barnabas who was the one that Paul was travelling with in the book of Acts chapters 13-15 as they travelled about sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is interesting as the book of Acts develops as we actually see in Acts 12:25 that Mark began to travel with these two men. You can imagine how excited Mark must have been to have this opportunity to travel with the great man of God Paul and to travel with his cousin Barnabas.

A little while later in Acts 15 we see Barnabas and Saul desiring to travel once again to encourage the believers and Barnabas we are told wanted to take Mark with them but Paul was adamant that he should not go for he had deserted them previously. For whatever reason whether afraid of persecution or just missing his home this young man had turned back. Paul and Barnabas disagreed so much that they actually parted ways as Barnabas took Mark and Paul then took Silas with him.

God has a way of working in situations though doesn't He? It may seem like these relationships were finished forever but that's not the end of the story though for later on in 2 Timothy 4:11 we have the following from Paul as he was in the last days of his life on earth when he said this **<sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.** So it would seem that Mark

was eventually restored in ministry and had come to the place that Paul had need of him. It's really a remarkable thread to follow in the scriptures as Mark at one time had a failure in ministry but then saw the Lord work in and restore him to where the Lord could use him once again.

This is the same Mark that wrote this gospel and many scholars actually believe that Mark spent some time with the apostle Peter as well in his life and that perhaps Peter had been the one to lead him to Christ. Some suggest that as Peter spoke to different crowds and people that Mark would then compile the works of Jesus writing them down. We learn in 1 Peter 5:13 that these two had a close relationship when Peter says <sup>13</sup>**She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.** So it's clear that Mark and Peter were indeed quite close and it would seem that Peter took Mark under his wing so to say and disciplined him in the Lord.

Two final comments before we get into the text. First, It's kind of like an interesting fact that when the Bible is being translated into new languages the Gospel of Mark is the most translated book of the Bible. Often times translators of the Bible will begin with the Gospel of Mark for a few reasons. First it is the shortest of the Gospels and second the Gospel of Mark does not require a person to have an understanding of the Jewish culture. When Mark does speak of their culture he also generally gives a very short description of why the Jews did these things.

Finally before we start a brief summary of the gospel of Mark as it can easily be broken into two parts. Chapters 1-10 focus on the first 3.5 year period of the life of Jesus as He ministered and then chapters 11-

16 focus on the final week of the life of Jesus and His resurrection. I suppose one of the most important verses in this book is found in Mark 8:27-29 which says the following <sup>27</sup> **Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?”** <sup>28</sup> **So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”** <sup>29</sup> **He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”** At the end of the day we all must answer the question WHO IS JESUS? The Gospel of Mark works to reveal to us who Jesus is and I believe we'll see the answer to that as we work through this Gospel.

So let's look at the Gospel of Mark if you look at Mark 1:1 which says **The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** It's interesting that both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke offer the genealogy of Jesus explaining those that were related to him. Mark however does not do that and I think there is a logical explanation for if Mark is presenting Jesus as a servant to the Romans they don't have interest in knowing where Jesus came from or who His family was.

We are told here that this is the beginning of the gospel and that word gospel simply means “good news” and certainly as we study the life of Jesus and learn who He is and what He accomplished we are hearing the greatest news ever.

When we see that the word gospel is attached to Jesus Christ we should understand that the word Christ is not the last name of Jesus or the middle name of Jesus. Instead “Christ” is a title and that word is actually the Greek form of the Word “Messiah” which means anointed one. Certainly Jesus is the Messiah the one that would come

to deliver humanity from the effects of sin, the one that would set people free, the One that would heal the infirmities of those He came in contact with.

The name “Jesus” is the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament and it means “The Lord is Salvation, God saves, or God is salvation” It is in Jesus alone that you and I are saved and the Bible plainly declares in Acts 4:12 as Peter spoke to those listening the following when it says of Jesus <sup>12</sup>**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

So this good news is found in Jesus who was the Christ the Messiah and then we are told that He was the Son of God and this is speaking of a Son in more than a sense that we think of all men coming from God...Jesus is the unique Son of God, who is also God the Son. Jesus in His life proclaimed that He was the Son of God and this infuriated His enemies because they knew that He was making Himself equal with God. At the end of the book of Mark it is actually a Roman soldier who declares in Mark 15:39 the following when the Word says <sup>39</sup>**So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that <sup>[g]</sup>He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”**

I would also mention that verse 1 of Mark 1 declares this is only the beginning of the good news as the gospel of Jesus Christ continues on today saving those who call upon His name.

Look at verses 2-3 which say **2 As it is written in <sup>[a]</sup>the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare**



**Your way before You.” 3 “The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.’ ”**

As Mark begins he senses that it's important for the reader to know that the coming of Jesus was not an accident...but instead it was planned and spoken of from long ago by the prophets.

I think that one of the greatest proofs of the validity of the Bible is wrapped up in the prophecies that were given and then fulfilled. Of Jesus alone the Bible gives over 300 prophecies many of which have already been fulfilled and those which have not will be fulfilled yet in the future. The Bible successfully prophesies the birth place of the Messiah, the murderous rage of Herod, the friend of the Messiah betraying him for 30 pieces of silver, the crucifixion of the Lord and the list goes on and on. No other book or religious work comes close to the prophecies that have been fulfilled in the Bible.

Mark in verses 2 and 3 actually gives us two separate prophecies that were given about a man that would come to prepare the way before the coming of the Lord. Verse 2 we actually looked at not that long ago when we were in Malachi chapter 3:1 and verse 3 points us over to Isaiah 40:3-4.

These two passages speak of the fact that there would come a messenger who would prepare the way before the LORD and His coming. In biblical times if a king or a dignitary was travelling they would have a messenger that would run ahead and prepare the roads so the person could arrive unhindered. They would prepare accommodations ahead of time and they would let the people of the city know so they could be ready as well.

So the Bible predicted someone would come before the LORD and I want you to notice and maybe underline in verse 3 where it says the word LORD and notice it is in all capital letters. When we see that in the Bible we should understand that this is a reference to the covenant name of God which is YHWH or Yahweh...This is actually super exciting as it means that Isaiah prophesied that someone would come as a messenger who would go before the coming of Yahweh...This means that if Jesus is indeed the fulfillment of this that He is God Himself in the flesh...which of course we know is correct as Jesus was God as displayed numerous times in the scriptures.

Naturally if you were reading this for the first time you would begin to ask who this messenger was and how this prophecy had been fulfilled and Mark develops who it was that fulfilled this in verses 4-5 which say **4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance [b]for the remission of sins. 5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.**

John the Baptist came on to the scene and you can read all about this man's miraculous birth over in the gospel of Luke. His father was a priest whose name was Zacharias and his mother's name was Elizabeth and they had no children. When you were a priest there were times that you would be selected to go into the temple to take care of the daily chores and when the lot was cast and it was time for Zacarias to go in and serve an angel visited him saying that he and his wife would have a son and his name was to be John. The angel stated that this John would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.



Zacarias as he heard this chose not to believe what was said as he couldn't get over how old his wife was believing she was too old to bear children....In response to this the angel Gabriel let this man know that because of his unbelief he was going to be unable to speak until the child came to be. We then see that his wife became pregnant and he did indeed stay mute until his birth where he was given the name John.

Now John grew up in a privileged home being the son of a priest and as he grew older you would think he might step into the shoes of his father but instead John loved the wilderness and as God led him he went out away from the city. We aren't sure how it came about but this John then began to preach while he was in this desolate place. His message wasn't like the messages of the rabbis for his message was a fiery message speaking of the need to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins in preparation for the coming of the LORD.

As his message became more popular people we are told came to him from all over the land of Judea and from Jerusalem and they were not only hearing the message but we are told that they were then being baptized by him as they confessed their sins.

Now a few things here we should understand...WE should ask ourselves what does the word repentance mean? It literally means to change your mind about something and in this context the idea was that people were to change their mind about their actions and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah that John spoke of and we'll get to that here in just a minute.

John's baptism was different than the baptism that you and I partake of as believers in Jesus today. The baptism of John was a baptism of

preparation...It was symbolic that they were turning from their sins and preparing their hearts for the coming Messiah. You and I when we are baptized in the name of Jesus are identifying ourselves as being saved and choosing to follow Him.

John's ministry is an interesting one and a model I believe for you and I who follow Jesus. Today churches will take surveys and they will find out what people think their community needs and they will ask the people what they want the sermons to be about or what they are interested in hearing. John however went away from the people to a desolate place and he preached a message that in today's world would not be very popular at all.

John was not a slick politician, he was not looking to gain a following but instead he spoke the truth and as the people heard it they were hungry for it. John was in the center of God's will for his life and this I would say is why the Lord blessed him so much. I would submit to you that what took place in the ministry of John the Baptist is a work that only God could do and today if something like this happened we would simply say it is a revival of God's work in the hearts of people.

Similarly today you and I simply need to look to the Lord to reveal His will to us and then walk in it. It does not matter how many people follow you, it does not matter what anyone thinks of you what matters above all things is you walking in the will of God, honoring Him and looking for Him to be exalted in your life and that's exactly what John was doing.

Look at verses 6-8 which say **6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, "There comes One**

**after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**

We learn a little more about John and we can see that he had strange attire and an odd diet of bugs and honey. You might make note that John’s clothing was similar to what Elijah wore if you read 2 Kings 1:8. Life in the wilderness would not have been an easy one and no one could ever accuse John the Baptist of looking to get ahead in life.

Part of the message that John gave was that there was someone that would come who was far mightier than he was and he did not even consider himself worthy to take off his sandal strap...Certainly that was a lowly task that no one would want to do but John knew that the One that came would be incredible, that He would be amazing, That He would be someone that was far greater than anyone in all of the world.

He then says that he baptized with water but when this individual came He would baptize them in the Holy Spirit. Now I will tell you that one of the greatest benefits you and I have if we are believers in Christ is that we when we believe in Jesus are given the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live the life that the Bible speaks of. Jesus spoke of the baptism of the Holy Spirit right before He ascended to heaven if you just listen to Acts 1:4-5 which says **And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup>for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”** And then verse 8 of the same chapter says

**<sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be <sup>[c]</sup>witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**

So John as he spoke to the people was saying my baptism prepares you for the coming of the Messiah but when He comes you will be baptized with the power of the Holy Spirit...You might say that when you come to Christ a radical change happens in your life and today that same reality applies to you and I.

Let's look at verses 9-11 which say **9 It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately, coming up <sup>[c]</sup>from the water, He saw the heavens <sup>[d]</sup>parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. 11 Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

So John is having this incredible ministry out in the wilderness and God is moving in people's hearts and John is saying that there will come one after him that is awesome and powerful and then enters Jesus...Jesus we are told here was from Nazareth in Galilee a small insignificant place...In the other gospels there was a point that someone said nothing good comes from Nazareth.

As we see Jesus here, He actually does something odd when you think about it. He goes to John and has John baptize him in the water. In the Gospel of John 3:14 we are told that when Jesus came to John to be baptized that in response John said to Him, I need to be baptized by you. You see John as he was baptizing people for the remission of sins preparing them for the Messiah just couldn't understand why Jesus would ever need to be baptized in water by him.

If you think about it Jesus never did sin so the question becomes why was Jesus baptized in water if He had no need of a coming Savior? I believe there is a scripture that can help us understand from Isaiah 53:12 which says **Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the <sup>[s]</sup>spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.**

We should understand that when Jesus died on the cross it was not for His own sins but for the sins of humanity as He took those sins upon Himself...He was numbered with the transgressors and Jesus when He went under the waters of baptism it was as if he was identifying Himself with sinful man.

I also believe that as Jesus was Baptized it was really symbolic of His entry into ministry...we will see that as soon as this takes place that things will begin to rapidly move forward.

You might notice that something unusual and supernatural took place when Jesus was baptized as we are told that He saw the heavens parting meaning they were almost torn in two and the Spirit of God came down from heaven descending like a dove followed by the Father speaking and saying “You are My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

We can see here that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were at work together as Jesus stepped into ministry. The Father could look at the Son's life to this point and say I am well pleased with what He has done already in life...and this let's us know that Jesus to this point in

His life had remained sinless. We can also understand here that Jesus as He moves forward in ministry would move in the power of the Spirit.

John the Baptist said this over in John 1:32-34 of what he saw during this time when the Word says <sup>32</sup> **And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. <sup>33</sup> I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”** Somehow God had spoken to John saying that he would see the Spirit descend like a dove upon someone and that someone would be the One that would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Look at verses 12-13 with me which say this **12 Immediately the Spirit [e]drove Him into the wilderness. 13 And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.** You might notice here the word immediately and remember the Gospel of Mark will move along quickly and its interesting here that it says the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. This gives the idea that the Spirit compelled Jesus or moved Him forward to this time of testing that He endured.

We are told that during this time of 40 days in the wilderness that Jesus was tempted by Satan. In the other gospels we are told of three specific temptations that Jesus endured but I believe personally that the Lord was tempted every step of the way by the enemy during this time. The Word says this of what Jesus went through in His life in Hebrews 2:17-18 which says <sup>17</sup> **Therefore, in all things He had to be**



made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For in that He Himself has suffered, being <sup>[1]</sup>tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. This is talking about Jesus who is our great high priest and how He was tempted that He might aid those that are being tempted themselves. Again from the book of Hebrews listen to what Hebrews 4:15-16 says <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus is the model example for you and I in how to overcome temptation in our lives. He helps us by His Spirit, He empowers us By His Spirit and He can certainly understand the struggles that we face as humans.

I want to mention to you that the three temptations that we have listed in the other gospels all ended the same way...With Jesus having victory over the temptation and each of these times He found victory the same way as He responded by simply pointing out the truth of what God's Word says. Each temptation was responded to with "It is Written" And I think you and I can learn from that for His Word is powerful in our lives as we face temptation. The enemy will so often try to twist the scriptures...you and I must see through that and stand upon the unchanging truth of the Word.

We can also see here that Jesus was ministered to by the angels and certainly that's awesome to think about that the Lord was cared for and ministered to just like you and I are by the angels.

**Look at verses 14-15 which say 14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel [f]of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God [g]is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”**

We are told here that John was put into prison and Mark at this point gives us no details as to why and how this happened though we get more details later on and You can read what happened in Mark 6:17-28 but to make it short John was boldly declaring to Herod that he was sinning in a relationship he had with his brother Philip's wife whose name was Herodias. John made it clear that this was wrong and because of this he was arrested. This will eventually lead to John being killed.

We can see that Jesus as He began His teaching ministry did so in the area of Galilee which was just to the west of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus did spend much time in this area ministering to the people before heading south to Jerusalem where He laid down His life.

One thing you will notice about the life and ministry of Jesus is that He was primarily focused on teaching the people and then as evidence to show that His teachings were true the miracles then followed.

So as He came and began to teach He began to tell those listening that the time was fulfilled and that God's kingdom was at hand. We should remember that the Old Testament spoke often of a coming Savior, that it spoke often of the kingdom of God and how the Lord would make all things right once again.

And then notice the command Jesus gave that the people should Repent and believe in the gospel. There we have that word Repent

again and I would say that even today one of the requirements of coming to Jesus in faith is the idea that we need to repent. To repent again means to change your mind about something and when it comes to following Jesus repenting is an individual realizing that they have been heading the wrong direction in their lives and they are making a choice to go a different way embracing the love of Jesus.

Repenting goes beyond just your thought process because when you change your mind about something it is going to change your actions as well...and so part of coming to Jesus is making the choice that I am going to leave my sin behind, I am going to leave my desires behind and embrace Jesus and as you do that your life will change.

The Lord also said they must believe in the gospel. That word for believe if you look it up in the original language is the word pisteuo (pistyo-o) and it goes way beyond just an intellectual knowledge about something...It can be said to be defined in the following ways...to believe, to commit unto, to trust in something, to be committed to something, to place your confidence in.

I think that there are a good many people in this world who have a head knowledge about Jesus...They have heard about Jesus, they know He is the Savior, they know that He died for them but the real problem is that they have not allowed that truth to move 18 inches from their head to their heart. They are missing the depth of knowing Jesus and living for Him. There are many who have the idea that if they are good enough they will get to heaven...that's not Biblical for the Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. It says that all our righteous acts are as filthy rags before a holy God.

There is only one way to come to Christ and that is by believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The good news is that Jesus died for sinners on the cross, that He bore our sins upon Himself, that He paid the price for our sins in full and those that place their faith, hope and confidence in Him shall be saved.

Over in the book of Romans 10:9-11 the Word says <sup>9</sup>that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” Notice it doesn’t say anything about your works or your abilities or how nice you were or how much money you accumulated or how many different churches you went to it says you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart.

Ephesians 2:8-9 builds on this truth when it says <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not of works, lest anyone should boast. As you come to Jesus realizing you have nothing without Him it is then that you and I find salvation, it is then as we ask for His forgiveness and His work in our hearts that He moves into our lives, it is then that His Spirit becomes a part of our lives and we are empowered to live for Him.

Have you done that? Have you come to Christ? Have you moved from just hearing about Jesus to actually placing your trust and hope in Him? If not today when we close I just encourage you to come up and I’ll be happy to pray with you as you give your life to Jesus Christ.

That's where we will stop for tonight and next week in our text we'll see Jesus beginning to call people to follow after Him.

Let's pray and we'll worship.

## **Mark 1:1-15 “The Beginning of the Gospel”**

Cross References

### **Introduction**

Acts 12:12

2 Timothy 4:11

1 Peter 5:13

Mark 8:27-29

### **Verse 1**

Acts 4:12

Mark 15:39

### **Verses 6-8**

Acts 1:4-5

Acts 1:8

### **Verses 9-11**

Isaiah 53:12

John 1:32-34

### **Verses 12-13**

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 4:15-16

### **Verses 14-15**

Romans 10:9-11



## Ephesians 2:8-9