

Immediately Prepare The Way!

- Opening Announcements
- Opening Prayer

Q: With the recent focus on Advent and the coming of Jesus, here we are again at the beginning of Mark's Gospel! Why do we need to REMAIN focused on "preparing" for the coming of Jesus?

Q: When you look around and think about how things are going in this world, does it seem even MORE important to get and stay "prepared"? Why?

Table Time...

READ: Mark 1:1-8 "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."

NOTE: Most scholars believe that Matthew's Gospel was written first, followed by Mark, Luke and then John's. Order can be pertinent to "why" things were written or left out or why there are differences in the Gospels!

Q: According to verse 1, "WHAT'S" this book about?

Q: What's significant about verse 2?

Q: According to verses 2-3, what's the message of the "messenger"?

Q: What's one way to "prepare the way of the Lord"?

Q: What does it mean to "make His paths straight?"

Q: Mark gives us NO back story about "John"! Why do you think that is?

Q: Wasn't John's birth ALSO miraculous? (See: Luke 1)

Q: Why didn't Mark (or Matthew, or John for that matter) include the "detail" behind John's birth? What does that have to do with the purpose of the book?

Q: According to verse 7, how does this show John's attitude toward and about Jesus?

Q: According to verse 8, what was the difference between John's baptism and Jesus'?

Q: What did the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" signify?

Q: SO...right up front in Mark's Gospel, what's the "Gospel"?

Q: How can this be "good news" to you?

Big Group Time....

READ: Mark 1:9-11 "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."

Q: What happened when Jesus was baptized?

Q: What did the Spirit's descent upon Jesus mean?

Q: "Who" spoke?

Q: What did that mean?

Q: Can you think of any OTHER times in the Gospels that this happened?

READ: Mark 1:12-13 "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."

Q: "How" did Jesus go into the "wilderness"?

Q: Why is the "temptation" important AND prophetic? (Hint: Leviticus 16:7-10)