

The Nearness of the Kingdom of God
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Text: Mark 1:9-15 (see also Matt. 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23)

Gospel of Mark: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topics: The Baptism of Jesus; The Temptation of Jesus; The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

Central Idea of Message: The appearance of Jesus is the pivotal event that brought God's kingdom near (cf. Lane 65).

Introduction: The appearance of Jesus is the pivotal event that brought God's kingdom near. In these paragraphs, Mark's narrative recalls the baptism of Jesus, the testing of Jesus, and the preaching of Jesus as he excitedly explains the nearness of the kingdom of God [and just like that, it was here!].

I. The Baptism of Jesus (vv. 9-11)

- A. Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan (v. 9)
 - 1. Nazareth, where Jesus spent the majority of his childhood, youth, and early adult years
 - a) Lived in the walled city of Nazareth and thus fulfilled the prophecy of "the angel of the LORD" to Samson's mother-to-be in Judges 13:5, which Matthew used as an applicable prophecy of the coming Messiah (Matt. 2:23)
 - b) Luke also says Jesus was brought up in Nazareth (Luke 4:16)
 - 2. Galilee, the northern most region of Palestine of its three divisions: Judea, Samaria, Galilee
 - 3. Baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River
 - 4. Would begin his earthly ministry at about age thirty (Luke 3:23)
- B. Immediately coming up out of the water (v. 10)
 - 1. **Jesus went "into" the river and came up out of the water: immersion is quite clearly being explained**
 - a) **Jesus certainly had no sins to confess but most likely "expressed a vicarious confession of sin on behalf of the many" (Lane 56), and**

so began his redemptive, substitutionary mission

- b) Jesus submitted to the baptism of John
 - (1) So John could identify Jesus as the One Mightier (John 1:31-34)
 - (2) To put his stamp of approval on John's ministry and message
 - (3) To identify with the sins of all other people who *do* need to confess and repent
 - (4) To signify his official acceptance of his own ministry and mission
- 2. Jesus saw the heavens splitting open (Isa. 64:1-2)
 - a) Probably the clouds rolling back in dramatic, supernatural fashion
 - b) Brings to mind the Red Sea parting
 - c) Signaled the arrival of God's presence
- 3. The Holy Spirit like a dove descended upon Jesus
 - a) The dove serves as a symbol of peace and gentleness
 - b) Descended quietly and softly
 - (1) No roaring or goose bumps
 - (2) **Many people probably have a very different expectation of what the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit look, sound, and feel like [no smoke machine, band, or strobe lights]**
 - (3) And this is the One mightier than John!
 - c) Possible purposes
 - (1) Visual confirmation of Jesus' deity (Isa. 42:1)
 - (2) Witnessed by John the Baptist to confirm Jesus' identity to John (John 1:32)
 - (3) Illustrates being anointed as King and Messiah (Acts 10:38)
 - (4) Signaled the end of John's ministry and the beginning of Jesus', since the forerunner had fulfilled his mission by heralding the coming of the King
- C. The voice of God from the heavens (v. 11)
 - 1. Please note that the language was understandable
 - 2. "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased"
 - a) Taken from Ps. 2:7
 - b) Urges people to fear and revere the Son (Ps. 2:11-12)

- c) His sacrificial death and some specific circumstances were foretold (Isa. 53:12)
- 3. **Please note carefully the references to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in these verses and also to the testimonial affirmations of Jesus' status as Son of God given by the Father and the Spirit**

II. The Testing of Jesus (vv. 12-13)

- A. The Holy Sprit immediately impelled Jesus to go out into the wilderness (v. 12)
 - 1. What happened to you immediately after your baptism?
 - 2. The Holy Spirit commanded the servant, Jesus, to go into the wilderness
 - 3. **Jesus' time in the wilderness was less of a test and more of a preparation for the next phases of his life - namely, relentless conflict with evil, not peace and prosperity!**
 - 4. **Is it possible that the Holy Spirit could compel us today to venture into a "wilderness" situation for a period of time where we are completely and utterly dependent on Christ for everything and we are, effectively, in the crucible of preparation for a coming task or phase of life?**
- B. Jesus remained in the wilderness for forty days (v. 13)
 - 1. Likely the Judean wilderness
 - 2. Forty days is a long camp out
 - a) Parallels with Israel's forty years in the wilderness, Moses' forty days on Sinai, and Elijah's forty days in the wilderness
 - b) Jesus would pass, whereas Israel had failed
 - 3. Being tempted directly by Satan himself
 - a) Adversary, renegade opponent of God
 - b) Devil, slanderer, embodiment of evil
 - c) **Resisting and overcoming the devil himself demonstrated Jesus' authority and identity as the unique Son of God; no wonder the demons whom Jesus would later encounter would confess him as such (Mark 3:11; 5:7)!**
 - 4. With wild beast
 - a) Added description of the wilderness and its dangers contrast sharply with the Holy Spirit's dove imagery

- b) Wolf, fox, boar, hyena, jackal, leopard (cf. Robertson 1:255-6; Vincent 1:164)
- c) Jesus was in the devil's domain, illustrated as an extremely hostile environment!
- 5. And the angels of God, not people, were serving Jesus, ministering to him
 - a) Without other humans but not alone
 - b) But there is God's provision and spiritual protection in the midst of the hostility!
 - c) **The presence of temptation, testing, or hostilities do not necessarily mean you are out of God's will and certainly never mean God has left you alone, because he will not!**

III. The Preaching of Jesus (vv. 14-15)

- A. After John had been taken into custody (v. 14)
 - 1. Arrested for preaching truths hard to listen to!
 - 2. Would eventually be executed
 - 3. **Preaching truth has always been dangerously unpopular!**
- B. Jesus started out his public preaching in the region of Galilee (v. 14)
 - 1. Jesus came preaching the gospel which was both from God and about God
 - 2. **What Jesus preached was the good news of the availability of God's grace and forgiveness which are granted to those willing to repent of sin and place faith in God**
- C. The contents of Jesus' message (v. 15)
 - 1. The time is fulfilled
 - a) The chronological clock had ticked down to the perfect time for the Son of God to appear
 - b) **Now was the perfect time for the Son of God to emerge preaching the gospel of God in fulfillment of the anticipated coming of the Messiah foretold by the Old Testament**
 - 2. The kingdom of God is at hand
 - a) The kingdom of God is both an "already" and a "not yet" reality, something C. H. Dodd called "Realized Eschatology" (Lane 63)
 - (1) It is near, but still far
 - (2) It is here in part, but not in full
 - (3) It is presently internal on earth but external in heaven

- (4) It is not a tangible reality on earth yet, but it will be one day
 - b) **Mark is saying that the appearance of Jesus is the pivotal event that brought God's kingdom near**
 - c) This kingdom would not be the result of a revolution to overthrow Rome, but would be established in the minds and lives of people
 - d) **God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom not a political kingdom (cf. Wiersbe, *Exposition*, 1:112), the locale of his authority, not the locale of his realm, and now "the powers of evil are being opposed successfully" (Turlington 273)**
 - e) **The kingdom of God is a reference to "God's rule over all moral intelligences willingly subject to His will, including the holy angels, and all believers of all ages" (Wuest 1:28)**
 - f) Presumably, God's patience with mankind's sinfulness had reached its limit and the grace and demands of the kingdom were each unleashed in the timely ministry of Jesus
3. Repent and believe in the gospel
- a) Repent
 - (1) John the Baptist had already been preaching "repent!"
 - (2) Confess sin
 - (3) Turn from sin [radical]
 - b) Believe
 - (1) Jesus kept the "repent" and added "believe"
 - (2) Believe what?
 - (a) In the validity of the good news Jesus was proclaiming as the herald and King of heaven!
 - (b) **Jesus called for the people to believe in such a way as to adhere to his message**
 - (3) **Saving faith is belief which puts the message of Christ into practice and battles daily to stick to it**
 - (a) What we believe does make a difference!

- (b) Believing the truthfulness of this message was the first step
- c) Jesus picked up where John the Baptist left off!

Conclusion: Commentator William Lane writes, "*Either a man submits to the summons of God or he chooses this world and its riches and honor*" (Lane 66). Believing in the gospel is to declare full allegiance to Jesus, the King of the Kingdom of God. Have you believed in the gospel?