



The Life of Christ Series: The Early Ministry of Jesus *Mark 1:1-11*

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Pastor Trevor Cooper

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark does not contain an account of Jesus' birth. The "beginning" is identified with the Old Testament prophecies announcing John the Baptist's coming and his ministry. Mark is straightforward, not writing a full biography or even a complete account of Jesus' public ministry but is facing the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Some suggests this gospel as the earliest account of Jesus and was written in the A.D. 50s to an audience of Roman believers. Mark, or John Mark as also know him as, was a close companion of the Apostle Peter and a recurring character in the book of Acts. John Mark's mother's home in Jerusalem was where Peter went when he was released from Prison. John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey. Mark plays a role in this gospel as "the disciple and interpreter of Peter" as he gives his account of preaching the cross of Christ. Here is the true story of Jesus that forever changed the world and just may change your life forever.

READ, Mark 1:1-13

"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.*"

John's MESSAGE revealed a coming RESTORATION and SALVATION (v 1-5)

Mark starts off by quoting the Old Testament scriptures of Isaiah 40:3 which says, "A voice cries: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." But I want to reread the full text and share with you how God spoke then, why God spoke then and who God spoke to then.

Often, a prophet will speak a prophecy of God that will happen in that day in time but will also be fulfilled or filled-up later. Since John the Baptist is the last Old Testament prophet, it is fitting for him to use the 'Bible' of that day, which is the Old Testament which is the same 'Bible' that Jesus used as well.

Isaiah 40:1-5 says, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

God chose to speak through Isaiah, a prophet of God, to encourage Israel (the people of God) that it is time for them to come back from Babylonian Captivity. Verse 3 and 4 appear to be a herald calling out that the LORD, the king of the earth is coming and bringing his people with him back to Israel. This restoration reveals He will bring them back to Jerusalem like a loving shepherd and remove all obstacles at His coming. This occurred in 538 B.C and we will see a full restoration and salvation come with Jesus about 570 years later. ⁷⁻⁸ **Mark shows the organic progress of REVELATION under the divine Lord of HISTORY. The Old Testament is the GOSPEL'S beginning and source. The Gospel is the final and inspired interpretation of the Old Testament message.**

Now I love this description of John in **verses 6**. We don't need it, but Mark helps the reader know John is very distinct from Jesus. Much like identical twins have their distinctions, it showed who the Messiah truly was. When I was in college, my twin brother and I decided to pull an April Fools prank on many of our friends during our college ministry service. We switched clothes, shoes and I had him send me a voicemail to listen to his voice and switch accents. Coming from Oklahoma/Arkansas, we both grew up with thick accents. I was a young teenager when my accent started changing due to my lack of self-conscience and from hanging around the most influential man of my life, my pastor and Tarah's father. On that April Fool's night, I had strange looks and not many people talked me (sarcastically), however my true identity was revealed whenever I started worshipping during that college service. I'm not sure if you are aware of this, but I tend to move a little during worship. I lift my hands, sway back and forth, and usually tend to sing loudly and freely. People knew something was different at that time. Well, Jesus' true identity was revealed to John and all of his disciples when Jesus was baptized.

Jesus' BAPTISM Fulfilled the MESSIANIC PROPHECIES. (v 9-11)

Jesus is being identified as God's only Son and becoming the exemplar for every person who comes to faith in Christ. For the first time, I've realized the prophetic pattern may relate to this scene of how **God SENDS the people a prophet to clearly SPEAK why is doing something before He does it**. Psalm 2:7 says, "I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." Isaiah 42:1 says, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations." John saw no need for Jesus to participate in baptism of repentance and probably asked the question "Why was Jesus Baptized?" John the Baptist was sent as this Old Testament prophet to announce

His coming and became a significant instrument in identifying Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. So why should we get baptized? **Christ COMMANDED and EXEMPLIFIED Baptism.** Thus, **Baptism shows that I really am a FOLLOWER of Jesus.**

Satan's TEMPTATION was Necessary to Prove VICTORY over EVIL. (v 12-13)

Jesus' temptation came right after His baptism because of the other gospel accounts and Mark's use of the word immediately, which is used continuously with his fast-paced narrative style. It is as if God the Father just put a huge target sign on the Jesus' back. Remember that God is omniscient-meaning that He knows everything from the past, present and future. However, every created thing including Satan does not know the future but only that which has been revealed. Looking at verse 12, we notice "the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness" to be for a purpose. It was no coincidence Satan was there. What was the purpose of sending Jesus into the wilderness? Well, we see Jesus confront Satan taking the first step of overthrowing his evil kingdom. **God CANNOT be tempted with evil, and he Himself tempts NO ONE.** Yet, **God sometimes sovereignly PERMITS Satan to tempt His PEOPLE.** It was God's plan for Jesus to be in the wilderness and to be tempted. We don't know the exact location of Jesus' encounter with Satan, but we know it was most likely the same desolate region where John lived and ministered. While Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, Matthew and Luke add that He was fasting without food during this time. This could be a symbolic reference to the forty years of Israel's wilderness experience in the days of Moses. Also, we read about wild beasts being in this desolate place stressing Jesus' loneliness and complete isolation from other people.

Understanding the distinct difference between sin and temptation is useful here: Temptation is not the same as sin and does not equal us being morally guilty for this temptation the same as though we had given into this temptation and sinned. Often, we are most tempted when we are hungry, tired or stressed especially if we are lonely or alone. All of us are relational beings desiring to be loved and created to express love. You or I can be in a room full of people and still feel lonely, unwanted or afraid. Our thoughts, emotions and physical struggles that become temptations come from within our self. This is called the flesh and we battle with it constantly. Since you and I are created beings, we are prone to sin. A broad definition of sin: **Sin is fulfilling a God-given desire in a God-forbidden way.**

Now, this temptation in verse 13 was not an internal emotional or psychological struggle, but an external attack by a personal being. There was no doubt in Satan's mind who Jesus was; this tactic was to not get Jesus to sin within His human nature but to get Jesus to violate the plan of God by revealing His divine power that He had set aside in His humiliation. Remember Jesus is fully God. **Jesus could not choose to sin because of His HOLINESS and PERFECTION.** Also, **Jesus could not exercise the magnitude of His glory because of His OBEDIENCE to the point of death, even death on a cross.** Paul says in Philippians chapter 2, *"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Before Jesus begins His ministry, He defeats the Devil and begins His work of redemption by passing the test of obedience. In verse 14, we are told that John is arrested for proclaiming the gospel by rebuking Herod Antipas's sin over his incestuous marriage to

his niece and Jesus is in Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God there. The King has arrived!

The Decisive ACTION from God Demands a Decisive RESPONSE from Man. (v 14-15)

Jesus Christ the King of all kings and Lord of all lords is here. This Kingdom is a person, a position of authority, and supreme reign that is fully realized over the entire universe and in the hearts of men. The coming of Jesus sets in motion all that God will bring about. God requires repentance and belief in response to His action. It is through Jesus that God graciously offers salvation.

If you are **a believer**, don't feel false guilt from having been tempted to sin. Temptation is a natural result of our sin nature. We don't feel guilty from this, we resist it and press on into holiness that comes from God. Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. As angels were ministering to Jesus, God will also provide angels to serve and help you during any temptation you may face in the world.

If you are **not a believer**, we should see that outside of Christ it is impossible to not feel the effects of temptation towards sin, much less to be freed from slavery to sin.