

LESSON 1



JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

Scripture Text: Mark 1

When the time came for Jesus to begin His ministry, God prepared Him by giving Him three things: (1) baptism, (2) the Holy Spirit, and (3) victory over temptation. Each was necessary. In the following lessons we will learn some reasons why they were necessary. What was necessary to Jesus is what is necessary to us in doing God's work.

In this Book of Mark, the briefest of the Gospels, is much proof of the Deity of Jesus and the purity of His teaching. The first verse introduces Him as the **Christ, the Son of God**.

MEMORY VERSE: *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

Mark 1:15

John Sent as a Voice

Mark 1:1-6 As it is written in the prophets . . . About 400 years earlier some of the last words written concerning Christ's first coming predicted the ministry of John the Baptist (Malachi 3:1-2). **John did baptize . . . and preach . . .** John was the messenger sent by God to prepare the way before Jesus (John 1:6). He dressed and ate very simply, but his message had such force that the people flocked from Judaea and Jerusalem to hear it. It was a call to **repentance for the remission of sins**. This was the one message necessary to prepare the people for the teaching Jesus would soon bring. Repentance is always the foundation for receiving salvation. Those who repented, John baptized in the river. Their past sins were forgiven. The dispensation changeover from high priest to Christ had begun.

Mark 1:7-8 John announced the coming of One after him who was greater than he in two ways: (1) In personal worthiness—His worth was so great that John was not worthy to loosen His shoes. (2) In the work which He would accomplish—His work was to baptize people in the Holy Spirit. He was Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of mankind.

Jesus Our Example

Mark 1:9-11 Jesus came from Nazareth . . . and was baptized of John in Jordan. As He came up out of the water two things happened: (1) The Holy Spirit came from Heaven upon Jesus. He appeared like a dove. (2) God the Father spoke audibly from Heaven claiming Jesus as His Son and placing His approval upon Him. No one can begin or finish a soul-winning work without first receiving God's approval.

Jesus needed no repentance. Why then did Jesus need baptism? Baptism is a symbol of being submerged in God, united with Him. Jesus was clean of sin and was united with God. His water baptism was a necessary example for the saved of all ages. It was a symbol of His position and a part of the fulfilling of all righteousness (Matthew 3:14-15).

Mark 1:12-13 The spirit driveth him into the wilderness. The Spirit was directing Jesus' life, as He does that of any person He fills. **He was there . . . forty days, tempted of Satan.** He met temptation to sin as every human does when he becomes a child of God, but did not yield to it (Matthew 4:1-11). Neither must we.

Jesus Begins to Preach

Mark 1:14-15 Now all preparation was complete and Jesus had all the spiritual equipment for His work. He went back into Galilee and started **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**. John had been announcing the coming of

the kingdom (Matthew 3:2). (The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are the same.) Now Jesus was beginning to set it up. **The time is fulfilled.** The time the Prophets had spoken of was here. No more waiting, as many are still doing in our day. John announced the coming of the kingdom. Jesus established it. **Repent ye, and believe the gospel.** Repentance and believing were what the people must do to prepare to enter that kingdom.

Mark 1:16-20 Walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus called Simon (Peter) and Andrew and James and John to come with Him as disciples. He went about teaching and doing good. **Come ye after me . . .** He called them with authority. He did not ask them to subscribe to a creed or join an organization but to follow Him as a Person. **And straightway they forsook . . . and followed him.** Here and in other places Mark used the word *straightway* to describe the manner in which honest hearts heed and answer the Lord's call. In this case there was no hesitation, no questioning in regard to consequences, no weighing of advantage against disadvantage. When they were called, they responded without hesitation. The fishing business (the old life) was gone for these four men, and it was gone for good.

The Power of Jesus

Mark 1:21-37 The people saw in Jesus something new and different. **He taught them as one that had authority**—the authority of God, for Jesus is God. The **unclean spirit**—spirit of the devil—obeyed Him. He had power over spirits of demons. They recognized Him as **the Holy One of God**, as the Opposer of them.

Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, a leper, and many others. He arose **a great while before day** to pray. He and the Father are One, but their union is not like the welding of iron. Rather, it is like the living, growing union of the parts of a vine which is kept alive by the flow of sap between the parts. There must be interflow of life between Jesus and His Father. Therefore, Jesus prayed. Our spiritual life must be nourished in the same way.

Mark 1:38 The power and miracles of Jesus drew great crowds. But Jesus did not allow this to sidetrack Him from the purpose for which He had been sent. He withdrew to preach in other towns, **for therefore came I forth.** He came to bring the Gospel to all people, to give life rather than to draw the acclaim of men. O Lord, empty me clean and pour me full.

Looking into this chapter we see that Jesus came to: (1) baptize the people with the Holy Ghost, (2) to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and (3) to establish the kingdom.

JUST A THOUGHT

We may see God in nature, but we cannot reach Him there.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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