

Read MK 1:1-12

^{NIV} **Mark 1:1** *The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

² *It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"--* ³ *"a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"* ⁴ *And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

⁵ *The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.*

⁶ *John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.* ⁷ *And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." ⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

⁹ *At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.* ¹⁰ *As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.* ¹¹ *And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

¹² *At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert,* ¹³ *and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.*

Make a note of anything that stands out for you (Words, ideas, themes or the characters spoken about). Try to get behind the

mind of the author Mark and why he may have placed these events first in the gospel.

Q Who are the two men Mark writes about?

Q How many sections do you think this passage is broken up into and how did you work this out?

Let's look at verses 1-8

Q. What does the opening verse tell us about Mark's historical document?

Q. What statement is Mark making about Jesus from the beginning?

Q What might this tell us about the approach he is taking, when writing about Jesus?

Q What do you think is the point of verses 2-4 in the mind of the writer?

Q. What was the outcome of John's preaching? (V5)

Q. Why do you think verse 5 is of significance in placing John as the prophet would prepare the way for the Messiah? (See Matthew 17:10-13).

Q. Write in your own words then what Mark is setting up for us in the opening verses?

From the outset, Mark has claimed about Jesus firstly that he is the Christ or Messiah, the one who is the savior of the world and that he is the Son of God. In line with the prophecy that a messenger will come before the messiah, to prepare God's people, John comes preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He is dressed in similar fashion to the prophet Elijah and Jesus understands him to be Elijah who was not recognized by the people or the leaders of Israel. All of these events for Mark are the fulfillment of prophecies (things foretold in the Old Testament) setting up the scene for Jesus the Christ to enter centre stage.

Let's have a look at verses 9-13

Q. Is there any significance about where Jesus came from? (See Mt 2:23)

Q. What do you think is the significance of verse 10 and the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus? Why would Jesus need the Spirit in the first place if he was God? (think of other prophets of God in the Old Testament)

Q. What is the first thing that happens to Jesus when the Spirit comes upon him and why do you think he goes into the desert?

What kind of Old Testament ideas does this bring to light?

Mark makes a point to connect both John and Jesus to Old Testament prophecy. Both have fulfilled ideas that were foretold in the Bible which distinguish firstly who will prepare the coming of the Messiah and then the coming of the Messiah himself.

As the Spirit of God comes upon Jesus, he is taken into the desert, the same place the Israelites wandered for 40 years under the direction of God through the prophet Moses.

His temptation by Satan in the desert is further expanded in the gospel of Matthew Ch 4:1-11. It seems then that Jesus may have begun his ministry by overturning the failure of Israel in the desert. Mark will now demonstrate how Jesus defeats the strong man (Satan) through various miracles and signs, therefore restoring the kingdom of God to Jesus.

The following Chapters will be Mark's convincing proof to his opening statement that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Q. Just on the basis of the opening verses, what would you be thinking about Mark's statement that Jesus is the Christ?
