

Introduced  
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Mark 1:1-13

Opening: Why do we seek references when we are hiring an employee, choosing a physician, or deciding on a service-provider? Why do we read reviews? Why is a first hand recommendation the best? [My references on the FBCW application].

Warren Wiersbe stated this account in Mark *“records the testimonies of several dependable witnesses to assure us that Jesus is all that He claims to be.”* John Mark himself (v.1), Old Testament prophets (v. 2-3), John the Baptist (v.4-8), and the ULTIMATE WITNESSES, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (v.9-11).<sup>i</sup>

The point: This “inaugural ceremony” introducing Jesus’ earthly ministry and everything that follows in Mark’s gospel gives followers of Christ confidence in what we need to share with others: Jesus is the promised Messiah and the Son of God, “who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29).<sup>ii</sup>

A little about Mark’s gospel: Mark (or John Mark) was not one of the twelve but he was likely the earliest of the gospel writers as he interpreted Peter’s accounts of Christ’s ministry. His audience was Roman Christians who faced the dangers of Nero’s persecution. His writing was crisp, concise, and action-oriented (he used the word “immediately 41 times.) If there had been an Internet in A.D. 60, Mark, with his “cut to the chase” style, would have been a blogger. His purpose was *“to encourage Roman Christians and to prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, Mark presents a rapid succession of vivid pictures of Jesus in action—his true identity revealed by what he does, not necessarily by what he says. It is Jesus on the move.”*<sup>iii</sup> His inspired writing aimed at early Christians under threat resonates today with Christ-followers distracted by a hectic world and still needing assurance that *“the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*<sup>iv</sup> (Mk 10:45).

**Mark 1:1–13 (ESV) — 1** 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.

- Verse one: Mark boldly stated that Jesus is the Son of God.
- Why was Mark so confident? He was likely an eyewitness to some of the events of Jesus' ministry he recorded, also in addition to Jesus (and John the Baptist) testifying to the voice from Heaven, Mark would record others who stated Jesus is God's Son: Unclean spirits and demons knew it (3:11 and 5:7). The Father said it again during the transfiguration (9:7). Jesus Himself said it in response to the High Priest (14:61-62), and the Roman centurion at the cross, professed it with a sense of awe (15:39).
- Mark quoted the prophets Isaiah and Malachi who predicted a "messenger" to prepare the way would precede the Messiah.
- That messenger, John the Baptist, was different in style and substance.
- He lived off the land, wore weird clothes and ate weird things, a contrast with the Pharisees who dressed sharp, ate well, and had money!
- John's message was also a contrast to Jewish teaching.
- Jewish culture called for ritual washings that symbolized getting right with God based on the law. John called people to be baptized in water to "show they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven."<sup>v</sup>
- John announced that someone "greater" was coming and He would baptize not with water but with the Holy Spirit.
- Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13 (ESV) — 13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. -- The baptism of the Holy Spirit isn't for a few but for every Christ follower when we are saved. **Ephesians 4:5 (ESV) — 5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
- Verse nine: Jesus came to be baptized. Why would the sinless Son of God come for a baptism that symbolized repentance of sin? John the Baptist wondered the same thing! Matthew's gospel fills in the blanks in Matthew 3:14-15: <sup>14</sup> *But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"* <sup>15</sup> *But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.* <sup>vi</sup>
- What does that say about how Jesus feels about baptism? How do Jesus' last words in the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) reinforce that?
- As Baptists we need to understand the concept of water baptism.
- There are some questions and debates among believers about baptism:
  - Mode of baptism: Sprinkling, pouring, or immersing?
  - The word **baptizo** means *to dip, sink<sup>vii</sup> to make...fully wet<sup>viii</sup>*. Immersion. How do we know Jesus was immersed (verse 10)?

- Not all agree but the New Testament points to immersion.
  - Sacrament or Ordinance? It depends on the meaning.
  - Roman Catholics believe a sacrament is “necessary for salvation.”<sup>xix</sup>
  - What about Jesus’ promise to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43)?
  - Protestants and evangelicals believe baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances “not considered a conduit of grace but simply a practice commanded to be performed by the Lord.”<sup>x</sup> Yet, some evangelicals use the word sacrament (are you confused?)
  - Who should be baptized? What about *pedobaptism* (baptism of infants)? Why could it cause concern?
- The most important point: What does water baptism symbolize?  
**Romans 6:3–6 (ESV) — 3** *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.*
  - What do Southern Baptists believe? *“Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.”* [BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE: Article 7a]
  - That’s our mini seminar on baptism, but things got more interesting in verses ten and eleven: **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.”*
  - There is no greater introduction and confirmation than the Father’s voice!
  - Our Lifeway writer states: *“This was the first time that God has spoken audibly to His people in at least 400 years, and He left no doubt that Jesus was co-equal to Him. The presence of the Father, Son, and Spirit means each member of the Trinity participated in this event.”*
  - Not only was Jesus introduced to begin His earthly ministry, He was proclaimed by the Father as the Christ, the “anointed” Messiah.
  - The Father had spoken about this special moment hundreds of years before through the prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 42:1–3 (ESV) — 1** *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. 2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; 3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.*

- Jesus' earthly ministry, atoning death, and resurrection were not the Father's "plan b" or a pivot because of what happened in the Garden. The Father knew Adam would fall, Israel would rebel and Christ would come.
- As Jesus the Son came out of the water, the Spirit empowered Him and the Father expressed His joy. The plan to redeem fallen humanity began its next phase, the earthly ministry of Christ.

### So, What's the Takeaway?

- What can we learn from this account of Jesus' baptism?
- First, we see Jesus modeling obedience to the Father as He came to John for baptism.
- We also see the importance of baptism in the life of His followers.
- Scripture doesn't indicate that baptism is a component of salvation but it is clearly God's will for everyone who has trusted Christ as Savior and Lord. In the Great Commission Christ commanded that His followers are to be baptized after we've responded to His gift of salvation.
- Beyond the importance of believer's baptism, we should be encouraged by what happened after Jesus came out of the water.
- Everything we see in this event and everything that follows in Mark's gospel gives followers of Christ confidence in what we need to share with others: Jesus is the promised Messiah and the Son of God, "who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29).<sup>xi</sup>
- We will see as we study the rest of Mark's gospel how Jesus displayed His divine characteristics confirming before the eyes of those He encountered that indeed He IS the Son of God and Savior of the world.
- Not only would He verify His introduction by miracles, signs, and wonders, He would prove His deity through His resurrection. Because He came as God's beloved Son He will also bring "great joy" to those who trust Him.
- This week let's rejoice in that fact!

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<sup>i</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 110). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>ii</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Jn 1:29). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>iii</sup> Tyndale. Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size) (Kindle Locations 66640-66642). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>iv</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mk 10:45). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>v</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). Holy Bible: New Living Translation (Mk 1:4). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. He made it plain the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit

<sup>vi</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [\*Holy Bible: New Living Translation\*](#) (Mt 3:14–15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

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- vii Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.
- viii Strong, J. (2009). *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 18). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.
- ix <https://www.gotquestions.org/Catholic-baptism.html>
- x <https://www.gotquestions.org/ordinances-sacraments.html>
- xi *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Jn 1:29). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.