

- 1) As I mentioned, Mark quotes the old testament less than any of the other Gospels however, turns out that that is exactly where we begin – with one of those rare quotes.

Mark 1:1-3 (NIV)

- 1) The opening phrase in each of the Gospels lays a unique foundation for the structure of that book.
 - a) Matthew begins by placing Jesus in the history of God's chosen people.
 - b) Luke provides a careful summary of the verbal accounts of Jesus' life that were being circulated among believers.
 - c) John opens with a theological perspective, emphasizing Jesus as the unique Word of God who has come into his own creation.
- 2) Mark introduces his account as "the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."
 - a) Mark refers to the "gospel" (euangelion, good news, tidings) three times in his first chapter.
 - b) Both Matthew and Luke waited until chapter 4 to introduce the term.
 - c) John did not use the word "gospel."
- 3) The term gospel would have been familiar to both the Jewish and Roman reader of this time.
 - a) The Jewish reader from its use in the Old Testament (Septuagint – Greek version).
 - b) The Roman reader would also have been familiar and, surprisingly from perhaps the same perspective but referencing a different person.
 - i) There is an early inscription dating from 9 BC that provides insight into how the word was understood in ancient Gentile context.

... and whereas the birthday of the god [Augustus] was the beginning of the world of the glad tidings that have come to men through him. ...

- 4) The word in Greek society was also used to relay good news regarding military conquests and victories.
- 5) Even with all that, Mark sets out immediately to convey his crucial message – the life changing good news (GOSPEL) about Jesus Christ – and, as we will see all the way thru this gospel the explicit truth that He – Jesus – is the Son of God.
- 6) Getting back to the verses at hand, Mark's quote here is actually from two sources Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1.
- 7) Although quoting from two prophets, Mark simply applied the words to Isaiah, the more popular of the two.
- 8) The theme in both references is the focus on a "messenger" who would "prepare the way."

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 9) With the help of the Holy Spirit, Mark understood the ministry of John the Baptist as fulfilling these promises. He was the messenger.
- 10) To us, the expression describing John the Baptist's mission may seem a little strange:
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'
- 11) The word "prepare" of course, refers to making something ready.
- 12) This picture may have come from the Oriental custom of sending servants ahead of a king to level and clear the roads to make them passable for his journey.
- 13) The people in Israel needed to prepare their minds and hearts:
a) clear away the spiritual debris and straighten any "crooked" moral paths
- 14) Mark's message was also to introduce a different vision of the in eagerly anticipated King and Messiah.
a) As we discussed briefly, and will continue to see throughout our study, Mark shows Jesus as the suffering servant, sent to die for the sins of the entire world.
b) John's message makes a connection between this suffering servant and the Messiah that the Jews did not ever seem to get.
c) They always saw the Messiah as the knight on the white horse – a political savior restoring Israel to its former glory – not a suffering servant dying for the sins of this world.
d) Mark's audience would not have had that ingrained idea about the savior.
e) He appears to want to make the connection clear that Jesus was not the knight on a white horse, and as unlikely as it may seem, his roll was far more important.
f) Jesus' mission reached far beyond the restoration of a national status.
g) Instead, his purpose was to provide an eternal restoration of the broken connection between God and all of mankind THAT ONLY GOD THRU HIS SON COULD PROVIDE.
h) The Hebrew writer in chapter 10 verses 1-18 clearly explains the entire relationship between the sin and sinner before Christ.
i) In the first few verses (1-4), he explains the situation of the Jewish people at the time John the Baptist arrived as the forerunner of Christ.

Heb 10:1-4 (NIV)

- j) As this passage makes clear, Israel's true need went far beyond a national restoration and being freed from Roman domination.

Mark 1:4-8 (NIV)

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 2) Before we discuss John's message, let's spend a moment discussing his situation – why he was where he was and why he presented himself in the manner he did.
- 3) John's powerful, to the point preaching and his lifestyle made him quite different.
 - a) Lived in a wilderness area.
 - b) Wore very different cloths from the mainstream Jew.
 - c) Had a strange diet.

What are some reasons you can think of that would have made him choose this way of presenting his message?

- to get away from distractions so he could hear God's instructions;
 - to capture the undivided attention of the people;
 - to symbolize a sharp break with the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who preferred their luxurious homes and positions of authority over doing God's work;
 - to fulfill Old Testament prophecies that said the Messiah's forerunner would be preaching "in the wilderness."
- 4) John's message was different not only from the idea of changing the way people thought about their sins but gave them a different way of dealing with them.
 - 5) There are several aspects of John's message that we need to see clearly.
 - 6) First, the people "were going out".
 - a) Clearly, they were making an effort to hear John since he was in this remote area.
 - 7) They "were baptized," and were **confessing their sins**.
 - 8) The phrasing of the original language reveals that these acts of baptism and confession occurred at the same time.
 - 9) Confession was not a new concept to the Jewish people.

Num 5:6-7 (NIV)

Lev 5:5-6 (NIV)

Prov 28:13 (NIV)

- 10) Confession then and now is more than simply acknowledging one's own sinfulness.
- 11) It is agreeing with God's verdict on sin and expressing the desire to get rid of sin and live for God.
- 12) Finally, the idea of repentance.
- 13) Repentance has two sides — turning away from sins and turning toward God.
 - a) To be truly repentant, people must do both.
 - b) Without apology or hesitation, John preached that the people had to determine to rid their lives of any sins God pointed out and put their trust in him alone.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- c) They had to understand that they were sinners, that sin is wrong, and that they needed to change both their attitude and their conduct.
- 14) Based on their reaction to John and his message, some at least did understand their situation in regard to sin and their relationship with God because of that sin.
- 15) When they did so, John would baptize them.
- 16) I think we need to note here, at the time of John the Baptist preaching and baptizing, the Jewish people did not have the Hebrew writer's explanation that we read a moment ago.
- a) The gift of the Holy Spirit was not a part of John's baptism.
 - b) We see this explained in Acts, when Paul finds some who were believers in Christ but had only been baptized by John – John's baptism – as opposed to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - c) They were then baptized as again and received the Holy Spirit.
- 17) As important as all of John's message about sin and repentance was, there was another portion of his message that was **really more important**.
- 18) It was a message saying that there was another coming soon that the people should listen to Him.
- a) One who was powerful.
 - b) One worthy of respect.
 - c) And the part that, they may not have connected but really should have – one baptizing with the Holy Spirit.
- 19) This is the real clincher based on prophesy for identifying the Messiah.
- Isa 44:3 (NIV)
- Ezek 36:26-28 (NIV)
- Joel 2:28-30 (NIV)
- 20) The idea being of course that God pouring out his Spirit on all people would come thru his Messiah who John is heralding.
- 21) John's message should have given a clue to the astute listener of exactly what the coming Messiah would be like.
- 22) A conquering hero on a white horse would NOT:
- a) Baptize
 - b) deal with individual people
 - c) heal sick and lame
- 23) He would be all about conquering and ridding the country of the Roman oppression.
- 24) There is also the consideration of exactly what John's words regarding being "baptized" with the Holy Spirit meant.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

25) One commentator puts it like this: “Being baptized with the Holy Spirit refers to the regenerative work of salvation.”

26) We see this I think in Ezekiel that we read a moment ago >>>>

Ezek 36:26-27 (NIV)

27) It is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit that occurs at the moment of salvation.

28) Paul tells Titus in chapter 3 verse 5 and ff...

Titus 3:5-7 (NIV)

29) Let’s go back for a moment and consider baptisms a little more in depth. Question ...

How many different baptisms are there in the New Testament Gospels?

John’s baptism

Jesus’ disciples baptism (called that because Jesus himself did not baptize)

Baptism of Pentecost and beyond instituted by Christ in Matt 28.

30) In Acts 19, as we referenced a moment ago, we see some who were true believers but had somehow to this point missed the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1-8 (NIV)

Were these disciples (learners) Christians (saved) or not?

No (as always, God has the final say)

31) Continuing our reading in Acts ...

3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all. NIV

32) From this, we can see that John’s baptism was another part of preparing the way for the true Messiah.

33) Paul further states in Romans, regarding the Holy Spirit’s indwelling ...

Rom 8:9 (NIV)

34) I think this clears up the question regarding their state of salvation – again these were believers but, at this point their salvation was not complete without the Holy Spirit.

35) Next, let’s consider Jesus’ baptism (or, should we say His disciples baptism).

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

John 4:1-2 (NIV)

- 36) Thus, Jesus never personally performed water baptism;
- 37) His disciples continued to perform that task during Jesus' ministry.
- 38) These baptisms, still following the pattern set by John the Baptist, indicating repentance and confession of sin.
- 39) Again, like John's baptism, it was not the final Jesus commissioned baptism that John predicted.
- 40) To get to that FINAL baptism, we must read Jesus' commission in Matthew 28 ...

Matt 28:18-20 (NIV)

- 41) Here, Jesus of course establishes the final baptismal act encompassing all that is needed including the Holy Spirit.
- 42) We see this instituted in Acts 2:38 ...

Acts 2:38-40 (NIV)

- 43) And of course, this is the baptism that Paul performs in Acts on the believers who had only John's baptism.