



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V22 N21

June 7, 2020

KING JESUS

“Introducing Jesus”

Mark 1:1-13

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners, and rose from the dead.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Hebrews 1:3



When did the good news begin?

On the one hand, three of the four canonical Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are remarkably similar, while on the other hand, John is noticeably different. You may have noticed this while reading them. As a result, the three are commonly called Synoptic Gospels (*syn*, “together with” and *optic*, “seeing”) because they “see together” or “view from the same perspective” the life of our Lord. The similarities between them are so striking as to imply their literary interdependence. For example, there is *agreement in wording*. Most of Mark’s Gospel appears in Matthew and Luke. Matthew has 609 of Mark’s 662 verses (90%), and Luke has 357 of Mark’s verses (54%), plus another 95 that may be reflected there. Only 30 verses in Mark lack parallel in Matthew or Luke. What’s more, the agreement in wording is often exact, that is, word-for-word in some places (see Mt 8:1-4; Mk 1:40-44; Lk 5:12-14; cf., Mt. 24:4-8; Mk 13:5-8; Lk 21:8-11). There is also remarkable *agreement in the order of events*. For example, when one writer omits an account or inserts one, he maintains Mark’s basic order of events (Lk inserts 9:51-18:14 then picks up the departed order at Lk 18:15). What’s more, Matthew and Luke seldom agree against Mark; that is, together they seldom follow an order different from Mark. Finally, the *agreement in wording even extends to certain parenthetical remarks* like “let the reader understand” (see Mt 24:15-18; Mk 13:14-16; Lk 21:20-22).

How are the similarities (as well as the differences) between the Synoptic Gospels to be explained? Did the writers all consult an earlier written source? If not, perhaps they had access to each other’s writings, but if they did, who wrote first—Matthew or Mark? Questions like these constitute what is known as the *Synoptic Problem*. Regarding its solution, we know that Luke used other sources in the writing of his Gospel. He says as much in its opening verses, making it clear that he did research and consulted other written sources: “Many have undertaken to

draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught” (Lk 1:1-4).

We also judge that the *internal evidence*, that is, evidence gathered from a side by side comparison of the texts of the Gospels, implies that Matthew and Luke are expanded versions of Mark. Mark is not a condensed version of Matthew and Luke. A number of arguments favor this conclusion. In a nutshell, the addition of material by Matthew and Luke makes more sense than the omission of material by Mark—the *argument from length*. When the same account is found in all three Gospels, aka the triple tradition, Mark often contains the account more difficult to understand that is clarified by Matthew and Luke—the *argument from difficulty*. Again in the triple tradition, Matthew and Luke seldom agree in wording and order against Mark—the *argument from verbal agreement and order*. Finally, certain omissions and wordings make much more sense on the basis of Matthew and/or Luke having changed Mark rather than vice versa (e.g., Mt 20:20-22; Mk 10:35 where Matthew softens a harsher-looking parallel in Mark)—the *argument from literary agreements*.

If the similarities between the Synoptic Gospels can best be explained by the supposition that Matthew and Luke made use of Mark, then Mark was written first and the Synoptics were not written in their canonical order—Matthew, Mark, Luke. While all of them were likely written before A.D. 70, Mark was more likely written in first half of the decade, while Matthew and Luke in the second half. More on the date of Mark later.

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, 2 as 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 wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"*

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, 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 comes the one more powerful than I, the straps 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 Just 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 wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "The beginning" in v. 1.
- Circle "good news" in v. 1.
- Circle "about" in v. 1.
- Bracket "the Messiah" and "the Son of God" in v. 1.
- Box "as" indicating *comparison* in v. 2.
- Circle "in Isaiah" in v. 2.
- Underline "the Baptist" in v. 4.
- Highlight "baptism," "repentance," and "forgiveness" in v. 4.
- Double underline "whole" and "all" in v. 5.
- Bracket "camel's hair with a leather belt" in v. 6.
- Bracket "with water" and "with the Holy Spirit" in v. 8.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 10.
- Circle "at once" in v. 12.
- Circle "being tempted" in v. 13.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain the relationship of Jesus to the “good news.”
2. The Old Testament quotations in Mark 1:2-3 (introduced by “as” indicating *comparison*) relate to verse 1 and to verses 4-8. Explain their connection to verse 1.
3. Explain their connection to verses 4-8.
4. Identify two ideas conveyed *to Mark’s readers* by the expression “Son of God.” (See note.)
5. Why did people submit to John’s baptism?
6. Put the *essence* of John’s message (cf., vv. 7-8) in your own words.
7. Explain the *contrast* in verse 8.
8. Verses 9-11 constitute one of the great trinitarian passages of the New Testament. How so?
9. Explain what Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness by Satan proves (cf., v. 11).
10. **Discussion:** Jesus had no need to submit to John’s “baptism of repentance;” God was pleased with his Son. Talk about why Jesus would want to be baptized by John.

Commentary On The Text

Mark 1:1-13 contains the prologue to Mark's Gospel. In the words of one commentator: "These verses serve as the lens through which all of Mark is to be viewed and prepare the reader for the story of Jesus of Nazareth found in 1:14-16:8. They provide the key for understanding this by their heavy concentration of Christological materials in 1:1, 2-3, 7-8, 9-11, and 12-13" (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 38). The prologue introduces the theme of the book (v. 1), cites quotations from the Old Testament that connect to the preceding (v. 1) and the following verses (vv. 4-8), and gives an account of the ministry of John the Baptizer (vv. 4-9), as well as the baptism (vv. 9-11) and temptation of Jesus (vv. 12-13).

The theme of Mark's Gospel is "the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God," a theme that reflects the inextricable relationship of the gospel to Jesus, who is the Messiah and the Son of God. While "Christ" was used as a name, rather than a title—to wit, "Messiah" or "Anointed One"—by the time the Gospel of Mark was written (cf., the rendering "Jesus Christ" in other English translations), it still amounted to more than a second name as in Simon Peter. Nowadays, some mistakenly take it that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary Christ. But here it indicates that the much anticipated Messiah of the Old Testament is Jesus, who is also uniquely the Son of God. As one commentator writes: "The title 'Son of God' points to Jesus' unique relationship to God. He is a Man (Jesus)—and God's 'Special Agent' (Messiah)—but He is also fully divine. As the Son He depends on and obeys God the Father (cf. Heb. 5:8)" (John D. Grassmick, "Mark," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 103).

The combination of quotations from Exodus 23:20, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3 link the appearance of Jesus and of John the Baptizer to the Old Testament. Jesus and John both appear in fulfillment of specific Old Testament prophecies, confirming that Jesus is the Messiah (cf., v. 1). This is evident from the fact that Mark takes the pronouns, "you," "your," and "him," and mention of "the Lord" to refer to Jesus, even though in their context they refer to the LORD (Yahweh), connecting the quotations to verse 1. And from the fact that he takes the mention of "my messenger" and "one calling in the wilderness" to refer to John, connecting the quotations to verses 4-8.

"The beginning of this good news starts with

John the Baptist, who in fulfillment of the OT (1:2-3) ministered in the wilderness to prepare the people for the Coming One (1:48). In calling people to repent and be baptized to receive the forgiveness of their sins, he prepared them for the one greater than he who was coming and would baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Stein, 38). John's wardrobe, camel's hair and leather belt, and his diet, locusts and wild honey, marked him as a prophet and identified him with Elijah. The clothing imagery derives from scripture. When messengers of King Ahaziah returned with a message from the prophet, the king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?" When they answered, "He had a garment of hair and had a leather belt around his waist," the king immediately replied, "That was Elijah the Tishbite" (2Ki 1:1-8).

John's baptism is linked to "repentance," "forgiveness" (v. 4), and confession of sins (v. 5). People from all around Judea and Jerusalem went out to hear the prophet, and those who believed his message concerning the coming one (v. 7-8) who would give them the Holy Spirit, recognized their need to prepare to receive him and enter his kingdom. So they confessed their sins and as a sign of their change of heart and belief, submitted to his baptism. John prepared the way for the Lord by preparing individuals spiritually to receive him, and by preparing people individually, he prepared the nation corporately to receive its Messiah. Jesus did not need to repent but was baptized by John in solidarity with him and his followers.

The prologue closes with brief descriptions of Jesus' baptism (vv. 9-11; cf., Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22) and testing (vv. 12-13; cf., Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13). At his baptism, the Father confirmed the identity of Jesus as God's Son (cf., v. 1). "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased," said the voice from heaven. And the Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove to prepare him for his earthly ministry as the "anointed one" (cf., v. 1).

Then "at once" that same Spirit sent him into the wilderness, where he was tested for forty days to confirm the Father's testimony regarding his Son, "with you I am well pleased" (v. 11). There Satan's temptations proved futile. In the words of one commentator, the prologue "portrays Jesus Christ, the Son of God as *announced* by John the Baptist (1:2-8), *anointed* by the Spirit (1:10), *acknowledged* by the divine voice from heaven (1:11), *approved* by testing in the wilderness (1:12-13, and now prepared for his ministry and mission (1:14-16:8)" (Stein, 66).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *The beginning* “The term ‘beginning’ (*archē*) can refer to the temporal beginning of the Gospel’s appearance, to the beginning of a description of its content, or both. The temporal understanding of the term is supported by the fact that in its other instances in Mark (10:6; 13:8, 19), it has a clear, temporal meaning (cf. also its temporal quality in Luke 1:2; 1 John 1:1; Phil. 4:15). Although this verse serves as the theme verse (not the title) for the entire book—that is, this book is about the good news of Jesus, Christ, the Son of God—the use of ‘beginning’ in 1:1 signals the temporal introduction of this good news in history” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 40). “Possibly Mark began his Gospel as he did (‘the beginning’) in order to recall the opening verse of Genesis. The good news about Jesus Christ provides a ‘beginning’ of as great significance as the creation of the cosmos” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2020 ed., 21, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf).

v. 1. *good news* Cf., “gospel” (ESV, NET). “The term ‘gospel’ or ‘evangel’ was not a word first coined among the Christians. On the contrary, the concept was significant both in pagan and Jewish culture. Among the Romans it meant ‘joyful tidings’ and was associated with the cult of the emperor, whose birthday, attainment to majority and accession to power were celebrated as festival occasions for the whole world. The reports of such festivals were called ‘evangels’ in the inscriptions and papyri of the Imperial Age” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 42). “When Mark used the word it had become a technical term signifying Christian preaching about Jesus Christ” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 102).

v. 1 *about* Lit., “the gospel of Jesus Christ,” which can mean either the good news that he preached or the good news about him. “That Jesus does not begin to preach until after the arrest of John the Baptist (1:14-15) indicates that the good news of 1:1, which introduces 1:2-8, must be understood as the good news concerning/about Jesus Christ found in these opening verses” (Stein, 41).

v. 1 *the Messiah* Cf., “Jesus Christ” (ESV, NET). Although “Christ,” meaning “the anointed one” or “the Messiah,” “can function as a title when used with ‘Jesus’ (cf. Acts 3:20; 5:42; 17:3), by the time Mark was written its titular nature, while

never completely missing, had given way to its use as a name . . . Yet, even as a name, for the first-century reader its titular sense would have been more recognized than today” (Stein, 41).

v. 1 *the Son of God* “In Mark the title ‘Son of God’ reveals Jesus’s unique and unparalleled relationship with God. It is the favorite title of Mark for identifying Jesus (1:11, 24; 3:11 [cf. 1:34]; 5:7; 9:7; 12:6; 13:32; 14:61-62; 15:39), and when Mark was written, it conveyed to the Christian community the idea of both preexistence and deity (cf. Phil. 2:6-8; Col. 1:15-20)” (Stein, 41).

v. 4 *the Baptist* Cf., “the baptizer” (NET); the Gk. participle means “the one who baptizes.”

v. 5 *whole . . . all* “Hyperbole, indicating the high interest created by John’s preaching. For centuries Israel had had no prophet” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Mk 1:5); cf., “People from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him” (NET).

v. 6 *camel’s hair . . .* Cf., 2Ki 1:7-8. “In our culture, we would pick up the allusions if a character were wearing Daniel Boone’s coonskin cap or Abraham Lincoln’s stovepipe hat and beard. This description of John is reminiscent of Elijah, which may explain his huge success. The crowds presumably believed that he was Elijah reappearing for his second career, to prepare for the imminent coming of God (Mal. 4:5-6; see Mark 9:11-13)” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 47; see Stein, 47-48).

v. 8 *with the Holy Spirit* “The bestowal of the Spirit was an expected feature of the Messiah’s coming (Isa 44:3; Ezek. 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-29)” (Grassmick, 104). The author does not record the arrival of the Spirit in fulfillment of 1:8 because it took place after the events recorded in his Gospel. But John Mark no doubt knew about what had happened on the day of Pentecost when Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled—at least in part (Ac 2:16-21, esp. v. 16).

v. 13 *being tempted* “God put Jesus to the test (and the Spirit led Him to it) to show He was qualified for His messianic mission. But also Satan tried to draw Jesus away from his divinely appointed mission (cf. Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)” (Grassmick, 106). In the first, Jesus *confirmed* he was qualified; in the second, he *confirmed* he would not—yea could not—sin. The reality of the temptation rests in Satan’s intention, not Jesus’ vulnerability.



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

The gospel, rooted in the person of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, began with the preaching of John the Baptizer who *announced* the coming of Christ—one more powerful than John who was *acknowledged* by the Father and *anointed* by the Spirit at his baptism and *approved* by testing in the wilderness.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Sitting at the playground waiting for my kids to get out of school, a friend asked me to share my “story” with her. I was in a complete panic. No one had ever outright asked me about my relationship with Christ in such a way. My story? Immediately a movie reel popped into my brain featuring memories of my life before Christ, a phone call to a friend asking her to take me to church, walking down the long aisle to accept Christ’s invitation of grace through faith, baptism, and my current relationship with my Savior. The bell was about to ring; there wasn’t enough time to share my “story!” I stumbled through a short version of my testimony feeling awkward at best when after she asked if my kids knew how Jesus changed my life. Say, what?! I knew then I had some work to do. We should all be prepared to share the reason for our hope, not only with other adults, but more importantly, our kids (1 Peter 3:15). Parents, our main job, far more important than grades, arts or sports, is to intentionally disciple our kids. Like John the Baptist, we are called to prepare the way for our kids to know and trust Jesus. This is the perfect time! The struggle we so often face is we don’t know where to start. So, start at the beginning. Do your kids know your “story?” Do they know how Christ changed your life? Are your kids prepared to share their personal story of the hope they have in Christ? We are praying for some amazing conversations for your family!

What Does The Bible Say?

What does the Bible say? Read Mark 1:1-13.

1. What did John do to prepare for Jesus?
2. Who spoke after Jesus was baptized and what did He say?
3. What happened to Jesus in the desert (read Matthew 1:1-11)?

What Do You Think?

Why was John’s baptism such a startling event?

What Do You Do?

Draw a picture or write a story about a person God used in your life, or how God used you in the life of someone else, to prepare the way for Jesus. Send it to KidPix@wearecentral.org for a virtual token.

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God/fully man and died for my sins.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 34:1

I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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