

JANUARY 5, 2020

## Introducing Jesus to the world

Tradition tells us that Mark wrote his account of Jesus' life through the direct witness of Peter, the Apostle<sup>1</sup>. His entire account moves with breakneck speed, focusing on the actions of one who interrupted all of humanity's expectations and set forth the agenda of the "kingdom of God" (1:15). This kingdom invaded a Roman-occupied world and confronted the fears that God sat in heaven and merely observed. In Mark, we see God-on-the-move. This action<sup>2</sup> wasn't a military campaign or a political revolt, this was heaven on earth! As we begin this study, pray for God to draw you closer to the heart of the Son of Man and ask for eyes to see the kingdom that he brought into this world.

- **Starter question:** When you think of the kingdom of God, are you more inclined to think of it as the realm where God dwells or where we dwell...and are meant to live it out?
- **Study.** What was John the Baptist's mission? How does his humility help "prepare the way"? Considering that "all the country of Judea was coming out to him," why do you think John's message had such appeal? (v.2-8)
- What does John mean by saying that Jesus would "baptize with the Holy Spirit"? (v.8)
- In verses 9-11, Jesus fulfills John's purpose by coming into the river. What makes Jesus' baptism so unique? What is the significance of the Spirit descending and the heavenly voice?
- After a period of testing and John's imprisonment, Jesus says, "the time is fulfilled." What do you think he means by this? (v.15)
- What does it mean to "repent and believe in the gospel"? (v.15)
- **Apply it.** When it comes to introducing people to Jesus, how might we see John's life as a model for our own?

<sup>1</sup> Fee & Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*. Zondervan. 2002. (p.279)

<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup> As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU,  
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY;  
<sup>3</sup>THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,  
'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,  
MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"

<sup>4</sup> John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he was preaching, and saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. <sup>8</sup>I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; <sup>11</sup>and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

<sup>12</sup>Immediately the Spirit \*impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

<sup>14</sup>Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

*Take some time to reflect deeply on the highlighted passages above and journal about Jesus' initiation of God's kingdom and how we can implement it.*

<sup>2</sup> In contrast to other gospel accounts, "there is relatively little of Jesus's teaching in Mark—mainly we see Jesus doing." Tim Keller, *Jesus the King*. (p.xiv)