

BAPTISM AND THE SON OF GOD MARK 1:4-13

Introduction to the gospel of Mark

*A good way to be introduced to the gospel of Mark as a group is to watch this “Bible Project” video that outlines the book. In fact, “The Bible Project” has done this for every book of the Bible and they are superb. Here is the link for the video for Mark:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGHqu9-DtXk>

SERMON POINTS

- The baptism of John
- The baptism of Jesus
- The temptation of Jesus

BACKGROUND

In 1:2-3 Mark quotes the prophet Isaiah (and others) wanting us to see that John the Baptist is the fulfillment of these prophecies: He is “the messenger” who “prepares the way of the Lord”, and he is “the voice crying in the wilderness.”

After a deafening silence from God (Israel had been without a prophet for hundreds of years), John the Baptizer, dressed like Elijah, calls Israel to a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.-“Repentance”(metanoia) means “a change of mind.” As God’s chosen people it was easy for Israel to become complacent and to see themselves as “good with God”, but John calls them to humility and repentance of their sins---which is utterly appropriate in light of the coming of the MESSIAH! Baptism (cleansing) wasn’t a new rite **but was required for Gentiles as one of the steps in becoming Jewish.** And so for John to call Israel to be baptized, would require them to true repentance--to say, “We, like unbelievers, have sinned and we need to return to God--to have a change of mind and heart.” It was tempting for Israel to point the finger to Gentiles and say, “they need to repent.”

QUESTIONS

Q: Through the Prophet John, God is calling God’s people to repent. Why do you think we are so quick to point to “the other” and say, “they need to repent”, and why do you think it is so difficult for us to see that we need to repent?

Q: Why are “Christians” so prone to judge “worldly people?” Is there more than one way to be worldly? If so, how?

Q: Our culture is deeply divided. How could humility and repentance from God’s people help heal our culture?

Q: The shooter at the synagogue in California last week was described as a “fervent Christian” by a major news outlet. Can you be a fervent follower of Jesus and remain a steadfast racist bent on murder and hatred? Why or why not?

Q: Jesus was baptized “to fulfill all righteousness.” What does it mean for us that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness?

Q: After Jesus’ baptism the Spirit descended on the Son and the Father said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” In what way is that good news for us and our beings sons and daughters?

Q: What does it mean to you that Jesus was tested and tempted in the wilderness for forty days?

OTHER PASSAGES

John 19:10–11

So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” [11] Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

Ezekiel 36:25–27

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. [26] And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Romans 5:18-19

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.[19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous.

QUOTES:**Commentator Mary Healy writes:**

“John contrasts his own baptism as an outward sign of repentance with that of the mightier One, who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. To baptize, or drench (immerse) in the Spirit evokes the biblical promise that in the last times God would “pour out” his Spirit like water, bringing about the transformation of heart that would finally enable God’s people to respond to him and experience his blessings”