

The Gospel According to Mark

The Present Enemy and the Coming King

Mark 1:12-15

Sunday, January 26, 2020

Introduction

Some weeks more than others, seem to serve as reminders of the fallen nature and the corrupting effects of sin on our world. This week there were several events and occurrences that put a spotlight on the condition of our world and the prevalence of evil. It's in times like these that we need a renewed understanding of the knowledge and the plan of God.

As we come to this section of the Gospel of Mark we are introduced to the enemy of God, Satan, as he tests Jesus in the wilderness. This account reminds us of the presence of the enemy, but we are also reminded that Satan has no power over Jesus. In fact, Jesus came to announce and to advance the kingdom of God that will ultimately destroy sin and Satan. Jesus also proclaims that all those who repent and believe in the Gospel will be welcomed into the kingdom of God.

Context

In Mark 1:9-11 we read of the baptism of Jesus and how God revealed Jesus as the Son of God. This was the inaugural event of Jesus' public ministry and certainly stands as a significant moment. But while Jesus came as God in flesh and as the Messianic King, the very next event shows Him as a suffering servant. We also see the enemy that Jesus came to defeat.

The Enemy of the King (1:12-13)

Immediately following His baptism the Spirit of God drives Jesus into the wilderness. The Spirit's work reinforces that this was God's plan for Jesus and happened for His purposes.

- **The Suffering Servant** – As Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan we recognize that Jesus truly experienced suffering and temptation as we do. Jesus' entire life was a test, climaxing at the cross, but this is clear evidence of His humiliation and of His acquaintance with our situation (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15).
- **Jesus' Encounter with the Enemy** – Based on Mark's omission of so many details included in the other Gospels (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-15) it can be inferred that Mark's primary aim is to emphasize the event itself more than the example of Jesus facing temptation. The event as whole reveals that Jesus knows His adversary and that He can stand against him.

- **Looking Back and Looking Forward** – There is a sense in which the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is reminiscent of Satan's work of temptation in the garden. While Adam gave into temptation bringing the curse of sin on all men, Jesus can stand against temptation and has become the means of salvation (the second Adam). Also, through Jesus the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 will be fulfilled, Satan will be crushed (1 Corinthians 15:22; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8).

The Coming Kingdom (1:14-15)

There is a gap of time between verses 13 and 14, but Mark includes the needed details to accomplish His aim of revealing Jesus and His mission. Jesus waits until John's public ministry has ended and then he enters the region of Galilee proclaiming His message of the kingdom of God.

- **The Gospel of God** – Mark summarizes Jesus' message as the Good News of God. We see the details of the message in the phrases that follow.
- **The Time is Fulfilled** – God's plan of salvation and of advancing His kingdom had long been established. The arrival and preaching of Jesus marked a new and decisive stage in the moving forward of His plan.
- **The Kingdom of God is at Hand** – The people of God had been waiting and watching for the King who would establish God's kingdom on earth. Now it is revealed that God's kingdom is coming in way that had not been understood before. Through Jesus the kingdom of God is inaugurated and is advancing as people are united to Christ (a spiritual kingdom). The full manifestation of the kingdom is yet to come, but even now we have the hope that it is continuing to draw near.
- **The Days of the Enemy are Numbered** – With the advancement of God's kingdom we are reminded that the rule of sin and Satan will soon be brought to an end (Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8).

The Invitation from the King (1:15b)

- **Repent and Believe** - Because of Adam's sin we are all born as sinners and thus born into the kingdom of this world. However the message of Jesus, and the message we still proclaim is that all who turn from their sins (repent) and turn to Jesus in faith (believe) will be saved and welcomed into the kingdom of God (Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 1:13-14).
- **Living as Kingdom Citizens** – As those who have repented and believed we must continue to live lives of repentance and faith (1 Peter 2:9-12). Also, we can look to the evil in our world and know that a day is coming when all will be made right – *His kingdom come*.