

# The Gospel According to Mark

## The Revealing of Jesus

Mark 1:9-11  
Sunday, January 19, 2020

### Introduction

As we read and consider the Gospel of Mark it is important to remember that Mark's intentions go beyond recording the life and story of Jesus. While there is much we can learn about Jesus's life from this Gospel, Mark's writing has a very specific aim: *Mark's aim is that we would see Jesus as the Son of God and submit ourselves to Him as His disciples.*

As with the other Gospel writers Mark's specific goal in writing impacts what events and teachings of Jesus he includes and what details are provided.

As we come to Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus he is brief compared to other Gospels (Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34), but Mark is true to focus: He helps us see Jesus clearly for who He is: the Son of God who has come to live and to die in the place of sinful man.

### Context: The Baptism of John

In order to understand the baptism of Jesus we must begin with John the Baptist and his reason for baptizing. John's primary message was that the people should repent; and those who repented of their sins were baptized as a symbol or sign of their repentance.

With this understanding in mind it should cause us to wonder why Jesus would come to John for baptism. Why would he submit to a baptism that was intended for repentant sinners? Jesus had no need to repent because He had no sin. So, the question must be answered, why was Jesus baptized?

### The Baptism of Jesus: An Inaugural Event

Jesus's baptism in by John in the Jordan River is the inaugural event of His public ministry. During this event several important things happen that lay a foundation for Jesus's ministry, but most importantly Jesus's baptism helps us consider who He is and why He came.

### Through His baptism Jesus is revealed as the Beloved Son of God

While other Gospels have more to say, Mark focuses primarily on the events that follow the baptism: three events that each point to Jesus as the Son of God.

- **The Heavens are torn open** – In the Old Testament period when the people felt cut off or separated from God they would express the desire that God would open the heavens (the skies) and come down. This was an expression that represented God making Himself known or accessible.

- Note that Mark doesn't simply say that the heavens were opened, but that they were torn. This same word is used at the death of Christ when the curtain in the Temple (that represented a boundary between the people and the presence of God) was torn in two (Mark 15:38).
- **The Spirit descends** – Out of the open heavens the Spirit of God descends and rests on Jesus. This is further proof that Jesus is the Son of God.
  - This does not suggest that Jesus was lacking in deity prior to His baptism. This coming of the Spirit is best understood as a special anointing for His ministry (Isaiah 61:1-2) and an authentication that He is the One who had been promised by the prophets (Is. 11:1-2).
- **The Father speaks** – While the first two events are full of meaning, the clarity of the final event is helpful. God announces Jesus as His Son. Something similar happened two other times (Mark 9:7; Jn. 12:27-30). Not only does God reveal Jesus as the Son, but as Son whom He loves and in whom He has great pleasure (both in His person and work).
- **Application:** As we see Jesus as God we should also recognize our need to submit to Him. And submission to Christ impacts every area of life. To follow Him as God is to obey Him fully and to follow Him at all costs.

### Through His baptism Jesus is revealed as the perfect substitute for sinners

- Why did Jesus submit to a baptism of repentance? Jesus came in the flesh in order to live a perfect life and to die in the place of sinful men, thus taking our sin and granting us His righteousness. Jesus submission to baptism served both as an act of obedience (fulfilling righteousness, Matthew 3:15) and as a means of identifying with the sinful men for whom He would serve as a substitute (Isaiah 53:11-12; 1 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus death on the cross was the ultimate way in which he "stood in the place of sinners." But on this, the first day of Jesus's public ministry, He was baptized and in so doing identified with those He came to save.
- **Application:** To see Jesus as the perfect substitute for sinners demands that we answer the question: Have we accepted Him as the substitute for our sins? Have you repented and believed?

**A Significant Contrast – An Important Example** – To see Jesus both as God and as the One who was willing to die in our place is a reminder of Jesus's incredible humility and love. We are wise to look at the example of Christ and to heed the admonition of the Apostle Paul to live according to His example (Philippians 2:4-8).