

The Gospel According To Mark

Part Three

Mark 1:9-11 [New King James] *“It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”*

To many thinking people the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist presents a problem.

John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance.

It was symbolic of the sorrow that people felt for the sins that they had committed and an outward sign that they had repented.

What had such a baptism to do with Jesus Christ?

Was Jesus Christ a sinner?

No, [2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5] was not such a baptism quite unnecessary and quite irrelevant as far as Jesus Christ was concerned?

For Jesus Christ the baptism was four things.

1) It was for Jesus Christ a time of decision –

For thirty years He had stayed in Nazareth, faithfully supporting His physical family. There are indications that Mary was widowed, so Jesus Christ as the oldest son had responsibilities towards the family as head of the family.

Jesus Christ must have been waiting for a sign that would tell Him that His life had to change, His spiritual ministry had to start.

That sign was the emergence of John the Baptist.

2) It was for Jesus Christ the moment of identification –

It was true that Jesus Christ did **not** need to repent from sin but here was a movement He was determined to identify with.

Jesus Christ identified Himself with those whom He had come to save from the penalty of sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 [New King James] *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

This is how close Jesus Christ identified Himself with sinners, being baptised by John the Baptist was part of that identification.

3) It was for Jesus Christ the moment of divine approval –

Jesus Christ had decided on His course of action, knowing the many prophecies that referred to Him personally.

Now Jesus Christ had the unmistakable approval of God the Father.

As Mark tells this event, this was a personal experience which Jesus Christ had, and not in any sense a demonstration to the crowd.

The voice did not say *“this is my beloved Son”* as Matthew records it but *“You are my beloved Son,”* speaking directly to Jesus Christ.

4) This was for Jesus Christ the moment of empowerment –

Hebrews 9:14 [New King James] *“how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

It was the Holy Spirit actively working in Jesus Christ the physical human being, that Jesus Christ remained sinless.

John 5:19, 30 [New King James] *“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’” ... “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”*

Jesus Christ the Son of Man admitted that of Himself He could do nothing, He was constantly guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, [**John 8:28-29**].

John 14:12-18 [New King James] *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

The same empowerment can be relieved by any true disciple of Jesus Christ today.

Satan tempts Jesus Christ –

Mark 1:12-13 [New King James] *“Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.”*

One thing stands out in such a vivid way we cannot miss it, the Holy Spirit “drove” Jesus Christ into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan.

In this life it is impossible that we should escape the assault of temptations, but one thing is sure, temptations are not sent or allowed to make us fall, they are to strengthen us.

Hebrews 4:14-16 [New King James] *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

It is to Jesus Christ we come when tempted to sin for He knows exactly what it is like, [Hebrews 5:7-9].

For the full details of these temptations that Jesus Christ was victorious over, brought on Him by Satan, read the accounts in **Matthew 4:1-11** and **Luke 4:1-13**.

Mark adds two vivid touches to this account of Jesus Christ's temptations by Satan.

"Was with wild beasts" – this adds to the grim terror of the scene.

Also *"angels ministered to Him"* as did Matthew.

There are always divine reinforcements in the hour of a trial or temptation. Jesus Christ was not left to fight His battle alone, and neither are we, [Hebrews 1:14; Matthew 18:10].

Mark 1:14-15 [New King James] *"Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'"*

In this summary of the message that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father are three great dominant words of the Christian faith.

Good News –

The Greek word translated "gospel" is "euggēliōn" meaning a good message. It was pre-eminently good news that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father.

Good News of Truth –

[**Galatians 2:5; Colossians 1:5**] Until Jesus Christ came humans could only guess and grope after God, until they saw God in the flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ, [**John 14:7-9**].

Good News of Hope –

[**Colossians 1:23**] The ancient world was a pessimistic world, in their struggle for goodness, through the keeping of the law, humans were depleted by failure.

Good News of Peace –

[**Ephesians 6:15**] Peace of mind that comes from our freedom from the penalty of death because of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, [**John 14:27**].

Good News of God's Promises –

[**Ephesians 3:6**] It is true to say that humans had always thought of God as a god of threats rather than a god of promises. All non-Christian religions think of a demanding god.

Only Christianity tells the truth about the real God who is more ready to give than we are to ask, [**Matthew 7:11; Matthew 21:22**].

Good News of Immortality –

[**2 Timothy 1:10**] All non-Christian religions are vague about life after physical death, and look on life as road to death.

Jesus Christ came with the good news that we are on the way to life **not** death.

Good News of Salvation –

[**Ephesians 1:13**] **Salvation which is not just a negative thing, it is also very positive.** It is **not** simply liberation from the penalty and escape from past sin, it is the power to live life victoriously and

conquer sin through Jesus Christ. The power and the presence of Jesus Christ are both found in the active presence of the Holy Spirit in each of us individually.

John 14:15-18 [New King James] *“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

This truly is very good news.

Good News of the Kingdom –

To understand the term “*Kingdom of God*” we have to go back to God’s original desire and goal for humanity.

Genesis 1:26-27 [New King James] *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

We see this is a two-part plan.

First, the physical creation of human beings in the “*image*” of God, the Hebrew word is “*tselem*” meaning resemblance, shadow, outward form, we see this in every human being who is born. Only this was created in Adam and Eve and all humans since.

“Likeness” is a completely different Hebrew word “*demûwth*” meaning manner, attributes, model or character.

As we know character takes time to develop, time spent in the presence of the person whose character we wish to reflect.

This is why all humans have been, are, or will have physical life in which to develop the very character of the Creator God.

This can only be accomplished by the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, when the “*fruits*” of the Holy Spirit, the very character of God, will develop in us.

Only then will God offer us eternal life in His created family, a family that will expand into a kingdom.

Romans 6:23 [New King James] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Eternal life can never be earned, it is a gift from God.

1 John 5:11 [New King James] *“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”*

It is something we can begin to experience now through the active presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

John 17:3 [New King James] *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

Eternal life will be spent in an intimate relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ seeking to know and reflect their character more deeply.

There are also hints in God's Word, the Christian Bible, as to what these humans, in eternal spirit bodies, will be doing.

Isaiah 51:11-16 [New King James] *“So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away. ‘I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of a man who will be made like grass? And you forget the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; You have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he has prepared to destroy. And where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed, that he should not die in the pit, and that his bread should not fail. But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared, the LORD of hosts is His name. And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, **that I may plant the heavens**, lay the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, “You are My people.””*

God is a creative god and He does not change.

“Plant the heavens” – everything that God creates has a purpose including all the billions of galaxies and stars!!

Isaiah 9:6-7 [New King James] *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end**, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”*

No end to the increase of God's government.

Hebrews 2:6-8 [New King James] *“But one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of Your hands. **You have put all things in subjection under his feet.**’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.”*

“All things” subject to the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, and with Him all who inherit all things with Jesus Christ, [**Romans 8:16-17**].

This is the vision that all who are true Christians now and who will submit to Jesus Christ in the future can have as a goal.

What news could be better!!

Repent –

The starting point for all the above good news is for us to repent.

Acts 2:36-39 [New King James] *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”*

This was the message that Peter and all the disciples brought and is preached now by all true servants of Jesus Christ.

Please download and study the articles on this website that expand on the subject of *repentance and baptism* to fully understand and apply to your own life these two essential things.