

Introduction to Mark

Saturday, April 5, 2025 8:00 AM

At the beginning of Mark's Gospel account, he writes that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of God." Then, he designs the rest of the book to help readers understand Jesus as the messianic King by showing the amazing things Jesus said and did and how people responded to him. Some reject Jesus' identity, others doubt it, and some believe he is who he says he is.

In chapter 8

Mark shows Peter, a disciple, affirming Jesus' identity as the Messiah. But what does it really mean for Jesus to be the messianic King? Is it all glory, peace, and power? Peter is humbled when he discovers that Jesus' path to the throne would require suffering and that all those who follow him would suffer, too. Let's reflect more on this.

Mark 1

Saturday, April 5, 2025 8:00 AM

THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son;[d] with you I am well pleased.”

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him. (**Mark 1:9-13**)

This strange scene displayed a humble beginning:

- Jesus: A common, unremarkable name.
- From Nazareth: An unremarkable, despised village.
- Of Galilee: The unspiritual region, not the “Bible belt” of the area at that time.
- Was baptized: Identified with sinful man.
- In the Jordan: An unremarkable — often even unpleasant — river. “Early rabbinic tradition explicitly disqualifies the River Jordan for purification, [according to] The Mishnah, Parah VIII. 10.” (**Lane**)

The scene also displayed great glory:

- The heavens parting: Heaven opened wide for this. The ancient Greek for this phrase is strong. It has the idea that sky was torn in two, “being rent asunder, a sudden event.” (Bruce)
- The Spirit descending: The Spirit of God was present, and in some way His presence was discernable.
- Like a dove: **Luke 3:22** puts it like this: And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him. In some way the Spirit was present and “flew down” on Jesus like a dove.
- A voice came from heaven: It’s rare in the Bible when we read that God speaks audibly from heaven, but this is one of those glorious occasions.
- You are My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: What could be more glorious than to have God the Father praise and affirm you publicly?

Jesus was identified with sinners in His baptism. Here, He was also identified with sinners in their temptations. **Hebrews 4:15** reminds us, For we do not have a High

Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but be in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

The significance of Forty — as in the forty days of Jesus in the wilderness — is a number that often shows a time of testing or judgment. In Noah's flood, it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses kept sheep in the wilderness for 40 years. This is Jesus' time of testing.

Forty days, tempted by Satan: Matthew and Luke detail three specific temptations Jesus suffered in these days and how Jesus resisted Satan each time by standing on the Word of God. But Mark tells us that Jesus faced more than the three dramatic temptations described by Matthew and Luke. This entire period was a time of testing.

Was with the wild beasts: Matthew and Luke make no mention of this, but it is significant. In the ancient Greek grammar, the emphasis is on with. In other words, Jesus was at peace with the wild beasts. This shows two things:

1. Jesus is the Second Adam, and like unfallen Adam, He enjoys a peaceful relationship with all the animals.
2. Jesus remains the unfallen, sinless one, with authority over the wild beasts despite all the temptation.

Furthermore, the angels ministered to Him: The sense in Mark is that the angels ministered to Him at the end of this time of intense temptation. This shows Jesus' authority, not only over the wild beasts but also over the angels. They are His servants. (**Guzik**)

Lord, thank you for sending your Son Jesus to earth to reconcile us back to you and to be our perfect example. Praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.