

THE PRESENTATION & PROOF OF THE SON
Mark 1:9-13

If you look up the lists of the greatest and most influential men of all time, you find similar names on those lists like Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, Isaac Newton, Leonardi Da Vinci, Babe Ruth, Thomas Edison, Martin Luther King Jr.,... names like that. But it doesn't matter what list you look at – whoever put the list together, if they're honest and unbiased religiously, Jesus Christ is going to be number one that list every single time. He is the greatest and most influential person to ever live even though He only lived 33 years. And I mean so influential that we base our calendar year off of His birth, like 2020 AD (*anno domini* – Latin for “in the year of our Lord”). And anything before His birth we call BC (Before the birth of Christ). He really is that great and influential on all of us. And that thought about His greatness is exactly what we left off with last time, was John the Baptist pointing people to Jesus Christ saying things like, “After me, One is coming who is mightier than I... One of whom I am not even worthy to wash the feet of.” John said things like, “He must become greater, I must become less... I baptize with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

And when we come to verse 9 today, that Mighty and Great One, Jesus Christ, steps onto the scene for the first time. And Mark is going to demonstrate through two events in Jesus' days of preparing for ministry that He really is the greatest man to ever live. What we have before us this morning is an incredible text where Jesus is both presented and proven to be the only One who is eligible and able to save sinners from their sin. Let's read Mark 1:9-13.

So we've got two events here where Jesus is presented and proven. The first event is His baptism.

I. THE PRESENTATION OF THE SON OF GOD THROUGH BAPTISM. (VV. 9-11)

Verse 9 says, “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” When Mark says that “**in those days**” he is just referring to the time when, as we looked at last week, John was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins out in the wilderness. From what I've read and studied it sounds like John was preaching about Jesus' coming for about six months before Jesus actually came to be baptized by John. And notice He didn't come from Judea or Jerusalem, these high and religious places like the rest (v.5). He came from His hometown of **Nazareth**, a place located in the northern territory of Israel, approximately 20 miles straight west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. It was not Judea or Jerusalem. It was a place known for being morally bankrupt. Isaiah called it a place of darkness that for a while had seen a Great Light. When Philip told Nathaniel that he'd found the Messiah – Jesus of Nazareth – he said, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?” And so I think there's a contrast here being made that says something about Jesus – He came to live among sinners and came to save them.

But the question that everyone asks is, “If John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, why did Jesus need to be baptized?” Jesus obviously isn't a sinner. He never sinned, and therefore, He didn't need to repent. He never even had a sin nature like us. So what's the deal? It's a good and honest question. It's a question John himself asked. And we'll get to John's question, but one of the things we need to look at to understand why Jesus was baptized is just to look at the **meaning** of baptism and consider where Jesus' life is at at this point. He's about 30 years old and up until now, He's led a fairly average life. He hasn't made waves by doing ministry and miracles yet. But as soon as He gets baptized, everything's about to change for Him. There's no going back to normal. From here

on out, it's not going to be easy but Jesus is saying I'm willing to do it. I'm willing to submit to the Father's will for my life in this next stage in life. I know it's going to be hard, but here I am – I surrender to this. The baptism is a big transitional moment that says I'm going to follow.

That's one of the meanings behind any baptism. In **believer's baptism**, we're saying I'm ready to be immersed in God's will for my life. I'm ready to follow Christ. It's a transitional moment.

A. The meaning behind baptism: I've trusted Christ and am ready to follow Him.

I'm a new creation and am dying to the old self-life. Though it's not going to be easy, I see no other way to live anymore. If I live, I live for Christ. If I die, I die for Christ. That's the mindset of a believer who gets baptized. It says, I've believed and I'm ready to follow. And if any of you have been coming to church for a while and listening to the message and you're saying to yourself, "I've trusted Jesus Christ as my Savior and I want to demonstrate my faith in Christ and my desire to follow Christ by being baptized," let me know and we'll make it happen. We'll get you baptized. That's a big and important step for every believer to make. Even Jesus did it – He said I'm ready and expressed it through baptism.

Now I think there's several reasons why Jesus was baptized by John: He was identifying with sinners, with Israel, and with John and John's message... but there is **one main reason** Jesus was baptized that we see in Matthew 3:13: "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?'" And so even John was a little unsure about why Jesus would come to him to be baptized but Jesus says to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." That's the main reason why: "To fulfill all righteousness."

B. The reason Jesus was baptized: to fulfill all righteousness.

And to understand this, we need to think that **even now, this early on, Jesus has the cross in mind**. Even in chapter 1, He has chapter 15 in mind. Right now, He is preparing to go to the cross with the thought that He is going to take the wrath of God upon Himself that we deserve and **before does that, He has to live the perfect life for our sins**. Before He dies for us He has to live for us. Jesus was born under the Law and is right now meeting every requirement of the Law and every requirement of God to be the perfect sacrifice for us on the cross. So He is fulfilling all righteousness, all perfection, which means that **the purpose behind His baptism is totally unique**. I mean, unless Jesus Christ lived the perfect life, He couldn't be the perfect sacrifice that we needed.

When Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, sinned against God clear back in Genesis 3 by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, what we refer to as 'The Fall of Mankind', they inherited a sin nature and every single man or woman born after them inherited a sin nature as well. So none of us, from the moment we are conceived, are even eligible to satisfy the ransom, or payment, that God requires for sin. None of us are even remotely qualified. So what we need is not an ordinary man from Adam's race. We need an outsider. **We need a "Son" who isn't a descendant of Adam with a sin nature but yet at the same time is a man like Adam. We need a second Adam who doesn't fall, and that is Jesus Christ.**

Jesus wasn't conceived through a man and woman coming together. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. It was a miraculous birth. He was conceived apart from sin and lived without sinning and kept every requirement of God to complete perfection and therefore, when He goes to the cross, He can then be our perfect sacrifice for sin that we need. Romans 5:18 says, "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act

of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One [Jesus] the many will be made righteous." So the **1st Adam**, the earthly Adam, transgressed and through that condemnation spread to all men. But in the **2nd Adam** or last Adam, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:45), righteousness spreads to all men who believe in Him because of His obedience. Because He is the perfect Adam, He can perfectly then pay the ransom. That is the reason He came. That's what our theme verse for Mark says: "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life **as a ransom** for many." And when you think of a **ransom**, just think a bill that needs paid.

❖ **Ransom = a bill that needs paid.**

It's a demand for payment. When criminals take someone ransom, they ask for a ransom payment, a certain sum of money before they will let the person go. And here's the reality folks: Because we are all sinners, we've all been taken ransom by sin and all have a bill that we can't pay on our own. Even if you combined everyone's righteous deeds done in all the world from all time, it still wouldn't be enough to pay the ransom. Why? Because we've all sinned, and what God requires is total perfection. So what we need is a God-Man: someone who is perfectly God and the perfect man, to be the mediator between holy God and sinful man. Someone who never sinned but fulfilled all r'ness. And it's like 1 Timothy 2:5 says only Jesus Christ fits that bill and paid that bill: "There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself as a **ransom** for all, the testimony given at the proper time." That, my friends is a **verse you will want to memorize. It shuts down two key lies of Satan:** (1) one lie it shuts down is the lie that you can or should come to God in the name of anyone other than Christ. We come to the throne of God through prayer in the name and righteousness of Christ alone. There is only one mediator. And (2) this verse also shuts down the lie that we must keep working to try and pay for our own sin. Look, if the ransom has been paid in full, once and for all, there is no more need to pay it. It breaks my heart to think about how many people are out there in their religious system trying to pay a bill that Jesus Christ already paid for them in full. The gospel says Jesus died for our sins because we couldn't and by believing in Him that ransom payment is applied your account in full. You can stamp it. It's been paid for! Hebrews 10:11 "He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sins for all time... and where there is **forgiveness** of these things, **there is no longer any offering for sin**" (11-18). You can't bring any more offerings. His was enough.

That's how awesome the gospel is! It's the greatest news ever! The moment you trust in Him, the ransom is paid and you can serve Him now out of love for Him and joy and freedom because the wrath of God against your sin has been satisfied through Jesus Christ's offering of Himself, the offering that the Father says He is well-pleased with. That's where we go next.

C. The Spirit and the Father identify with the Son.

"Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'" So not only is Isaiah's prophecy pointing to Christ, and John pointing to Christ, heaven itself rips open and gives testimony as well – the Spirit and the Father come at the same time and point to Christ, saying, "This is the One! This is the One able to take away the sins of the world. This is the One in whom I am well-pleased!" It's a magnificent moment where we see one of the clearest expressions of the Trinity in all the Bible.

❖ **The Trinity is clearly revealed at Jesus' baptism.**

The Trinity is the fact that there is One God but He exists in three Persons. It's kind of confusing but it is the clear testimony of Scripture. You have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God – BUT – the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. And what we see here at Jesus' baptism is all three eternally existing and equal members of the Godhead appearing and interacting at the same time. It's a pretty incredible and unique moment.

First, we give our attention to what the **Holy Spirit** does. He descends upon Christ to **anoint** Him for ministry. I think it reminds us of the OT concept for when a priest who was about to begin ministry, would be anointed by having oil poured on his head, committing him to a specific office or function in which he would serve. Here, Jesus is being **anointed** for His ministry publicly.

The same language though is used of believers in the NT as well. Through the Spirit who **anoints us when we believe** (1 Jn. 2:20), we receive spiritual gifts and power to do ministry as well but this power is different than the world's idea of power. This power is **gentle** and **peaceable** and not domineering – like a **dove. It's an irresistible gentleness.** If the world was to choose a bird to be symbolic of power, it would choose a duck or a falcon or an eagle like the Chadron State Eagles. We have lots of sports teams with those predator bird mascots but we don't have any sports teams called "The Doves". I can see it now, a hockey team called "The Detroit Doves" or a football team called "The Denver Doves" because that wouldn't "fly" in the sports world. And that's my terrible pun for this morning, but the Spirit being represented by a dove says something, doesn't it? It says that God is humble and gentle at heart and seeks peace. And that describes Jesus' First Coming well, where He is seeking peace with sinners. Not only is it a good description but it is **a familiar description** of the Spirit. Like Genesis 1:2, the Spirit is described as hovering (brooding) over the surface of the waters – like a nested bird caring for its young – the Spirit was hovering at the beginning of creation. Creation was renewed through the global flood when Noah sent out the dove. There's a lot of symbolism in the dove about creation and peace and gentleness. And the dove here seems symbolic a new covenant of peace that's about to begin. He's making things new - bringing about a new covenant and new creations through His life.

And that's something that the Father makes it loud and clear, **audibly**, that He Himself is **well-pleased** with this. God the Father is pleased – He is **satisfied** – with Christ the Son. And that is the only evaluation that matters. And that, by the way, is one of 3 times when the Father spoke audibly concerning His Son. Once here, once on the mount of transfiguration and lastly at the crucifixion. This baptism clearly presents Jesus Christ as the one who is able to take away sins.

And He's going to prove it in the next event of His testing in the wilderness.

II. **THE PROOF OF THE SON OF GOD THROUGH TESTING. (VV. 12-13)**

"Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him." At first, this just seems strange to us. Why would the Spirit impel Him to go and be tested by Satan in the wilderness? And what does this have to do with anything? With baptism?

Well, at the baptism, the claim has been made that Jesus is the Son of God and He did it to fulfill all righteousness. And now, that claim is being tested for the first time. Is He really the Son? Is He really *able* to fulfill all righteousness? Is He really the 2nd Adam who *won't fall when tempted*? And those questions are there because He is God, yes, but He is also a man. And **Jesus, the man, is**

being tested. Before there is a cross, the worth of what will be done on that cross must be tested and proven worthy. If Jesus fails the test, then we're hopeless. If He wasn't victorious here, we don't have hope for victory either, so there's a lot riding on this testing – more than we realize at first. The first Adam failed when tempted by Satan. What will be the outcome of the 2nd Adam?

One thing to notice is that Satan is not the one in control here. It was the Spirit that impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. It was all part of the divine plan and the Spirit of God was playing an active role.¹ Satan's just trying to take advantage of the situation. Everyone's pointing to Christ and he's trying to take away from Christ! That's what Satan does. And what's significant about **forty days** is that it's known as **a time of testing for men.**

- The entire earth flooded for forty day and forty nights during that test.
- Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days while Israel was tested below.
- Ezekiel laid on his side for 40 days to symbolize the coming Babylonian judgment on Judah.
- Jonah preached to Nineveh for 40 days that they needed to repent.
- Israel spied out the promised land for 40 days and ended up in the wilderness for 40 years.

Forty is significant because there's some kind of test going on between man and his submission to God's will, and here, **the perfect human representative is being tested.** It's a big moment! A big deal! Matthew and Luke record in greater length Satan's tempting of Jesus three separate times but **Mark doesn't get into the details because Mark has a different purpose.** But I will say though that when you study the other accounts and how **Satan tempted Jesus, He basically tempted Jesus to skip the difficulties – to skip the cross** on the way to His messianic and millennial throne – but **God's will for Jesus was in the difficulties! In the cross.** And so Jesus resists Satan, using Scripture every time, and I think Hebrews 4:15 says well what the outcome of His tempting was: "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." His entire life, this testing included, He aced it. Praise the Lord!

The 1st Adam, in paradise, failed when tempted. But the 2nd Adam, in the wilderness, prevails! **BUT NOTICE:** That though Jesus Christ is victorious in the wilderness, Mark doesn't mention it like the other gospel writers. Mark's doesn't have a victorious ending, yet. It has more of a continuous feel to it. Why? Because I think Mark's whole point is to show that Jesus meets **constant confrontation and difficulty and temptation from the moment Jesus begins His ministry until the cross.** You don't sense the victory and you don't sense some mountain top experience – as Weirsbe said, "There's no basking in the sun of the heavenly voice"² or heavenly applause. **What you sense, instead, is transition – the beginning of pain and conflict and testing that really isn't complete until the cross.** And that's exactly something that Mark's original audience could relate too.

They were Roman believers undergoing persecution. And like in countries of persecution around the world, identifying with Christ through baptism can be the beginning of serious pain and trial and temptation as well. You can say you're a Christian all you want in some areas around the world, but the moment you get baptized is the moment you enter the wilderness. In some places your family will ostracize you for being a Christian. They burn your house down. They beat you and throw you in jail just for sharing the gospel. And so I think Mark's original audience would be so blessed to hear that even Jesus, from the moment He was baptized, entered into difficulty. That God's will for Jesus was in the difficulties and God's will for them includes difficulties as well.

I think that's why he mentions Jesus was among the **wild beasts** and no other gospel writer does. In ancient Rome, believers were often literally torn apart by beasts like dogs and lions. This whole book has those notes of familiarity to it for those persecuted believers.³ And not only would they find encouragement in Jesus' being surrounded by beasts, they had to find encouragement in that the **angels** that ministered to Him during this time. Kind of like the angel that ministered to Elijah when he was forty days in the wilderness or the angel of the Lord helped Israel forty years in the wilderness. Angels and difficult situations for believers go hand-in-hand. I'm sure you've heard plenty of stories about it through ministries like Voice of the Martyrs. Hebrews says that angels are ministering spirits sent by God to render service for the sake of those who inherit salvation. It's comforting to know, especially for those in difficult times, that God has intelligent beings called angels whose purpose is to minister to us in our difficult wilderness experiences.

And we all have wilderness experiences. There's a lot to enjoy in this world, in creation, but it's pretty evident that this world is not always a Christian's playground. Often times, it's more like a wilderness experience – a spiritual battlefield with constant buffeting and tempting and testing. And what this passage says is that we can expect it – and resistance to the enemy is still necessary until the Lord takes us home. And we can be victorious because He was victorious. I think that's what Mark's trying to say here. If the Son of Man faced difficulties, we can know we will too. But God's will for the Son was also in the difficulties.

❖ **We all have difficult wilderness experiences in this life, but God's will is often found in them. God works in these difficult times in life.**

He uses the difficult situations to make us more like His Son, global virus situations included.

But most importantly, Mark wrote down these two events at the beginning of Jesus' ministry to prove that:

❖ **Jesus Christ is the Son of God who is not only eligible and able to save sinners.**

And if you haven't placed your faith in Jesus Christ, maybe now is the time. Just pray to God with complete honesty of the fact that you're a sinner and in need of Savior and tell Him that you believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior who paid the ransom for your sins on the cross and was raised to life 3 days later to prove it. You're not trusting in anyone or anything other than His sacrifice on the cross.

¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of the Messiah from a Jewish Messianic Perspective, Vol. 1* (San Antonio: Ariel Ministries), 495.

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: NT* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 91.

³ William Lane, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 15.