

Jesus Christ Proclaimed

Mark 1: 1-8

As we begin our study in Mark's Gospel, it is interesting to note that he doesn't offer any genealogy of Christ, the events surrounding His birth, or any details about His childhood. These would have been essential to reach a Jewish audience, but Mark is writing with a Gentile audience in mind. He jumps right in, immediately proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. [Mark 1:1 – The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.](#) Mark identified Him as Jesus, meaning "Jehovah is salvation." He proclaimed Him as Christ, the "Jewish Messiah; the Anointed One." He also affirmed that Jesus was in fact the Son of God.

Mark declares to the reader that he intends to discuss the "gospel" of Jesus Christ. These opening words mark the beginning of the accounts surrounding the Gospel or "good news" of Jesus Christ. As we begin a verse by verse study of Mark's Gospel, I want to examine the [details](#) of this opening scene as we consider: [Jesus Christ Proclaimed.](#)

I. A Prophecy Fulfilled (2-3) – Although Mark is appealing to a Gentile audience, he doesn't abandon or neglect the Jewish association or biblical prophecy regarding Christ. Clearly he seeks to reveal Jesus as the Christ, Savior and Redeemer of the world to all who will believe upon Him by faith. He begins by discussing a fulfillment of prophecy regarding Christ. Consider:

A. John's Purpose (2) – [As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.](#) Mark spoke of prophecy given hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus concerning a prophet, sent from God, to prepare the way for Jesus. [Mal.3:1 – Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.](#) This messenger was John the Baptist, sent to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry upon earth. John began to lay the groundwork for Jesus, calling on the people to repent of their sin and prepare for the coming of Christ the Lord, the Redeemer of men.

B. John's Preaching (3) – [The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.](#) Mark also spoke of the message John faithfully preached prior to Jesus arriving on the scene. He was a lone voice, crying out in the desert places, calling the people to prepare for the coming of Messiah. [Isaiah 40:3 – The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.](#)

- Few properly understand the life and ministry of John the Baptist. Although his life is recorded in the New Testament, following the silent years from Malachi to Matthew, he is actually the last of the Old Testament prophets. At this time in Israel's history, the Jews had become complacent and lost sight of genuine worship and service to the Lord. They found themselves consumed in a form of dead religion that promoted particular rituals and adherence to the law, instead of a personal, fulfilling relationship with the Lord. John came preaching against dead, orthodox religion, proclaiming the coming of Christ!
- Sadly there are many similarities within modern society and the environment John faced. Many pastors and congregations are more concerned with humanism or long held legalism than doctrinal preaching consistent with the Bible. We need men in our day like John, who will proclaim the truths of God's Word instead of the popular, accepted topics and trends of our day!

II. A Prophet Revealed (4-6) – Mark dealt with the life and ministry of John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets. Notice:

A. His Message (4b) – [John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.](#) John preached a message of repentance for the remission of sins. He confronted the people regarding their sinful lives. Repentance has the idea of "*a reversal; a change in life that results in a change in action.*" He declared that repentance would result in the remission of sins. Those who repented of sin would experience forgiveness and pardon from their sin.

- This too is a message that is little shared today, but it needs to be honestly proclaimed. Men of God need to preach a message of repentance. The world is being led to believe they can live as they please without consequence. They have the idea they are accountable to no one. Repentance, admitting and turning from sin, is essential for salvation!

B. His Methods (4a, 5b) – [John did baptize in the wilderness.](#) ^[5b] [...and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.](#) In that day baptism was not foreign to the Jews, but John's methods regarding baptism were. The Jews were accustomed to Gentiles being baptized, revealing the change in their lives. However, the Jews were not accustomed to those of Hebrew descent being baptized. As John baptized Jews, he caught the attention of many.

- While John did baptize those who repented of their sin, he did not preach nor practice baptismal regeneration. He did not preach that baptism resulted in the forgiveness of sin, but was an outward testimony of forgiveness having been received. Their immersion in the Jordan River was a public testimony of their changed lives. We continue to follow this practice, mandated by

our Lord, as a public testimony of the inward change through salvation. While these were baptized prior to the crucifixion of Christ on the cross, the principles remain the same. Baptism serves as a testimony of a changed life in Christ, and was never intended as a means of salvation.

C. The Multitudes (5) – [And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.](#) As John preached in the wilderness, preparing the way for Christ, great multitudes came into the desert from all over Judea to hear him. He was sent forth by God, and his ministry accomplished that which he was sent to perform. As Jesus came on the scene, John’s ministry quickly diminished, having fulfilled his purpose. He was faithful to the work, and God provided the results. Someone has estimated that he may have baptized as many as 300,000 Jews.

- We will likely never experience the multitudes John did in ministry, but the Lord remains faithful. If we will follow His direction, serving Him faithfully, He will provide the desired results. John did not follow the accepted practices of his day and yet God honored his efforts. We are not called to conform to the dictates of our culture, but remain true to the Lord.

D. His Modesty (6) – [And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey.](#) John was not consumed with the riches and cares of this life. He lived a very meager existence, seeking to focus on the Lord instead of the pursuit of wealth and position. His garments were made from animal skins and camel hair. His diet consisted primarily of locusts and wild honey found within the desert region in which he ministered. He lived life much differently than the high priest and social elite within Jerusalem.

- John is an interesting character. He preached a bold message and lived a rugged life. His appearance alone would have prevented him from preaching in the temple and synagogues. Had he been invited, he would likely not have been asked to return. His life reveals that obedience to God is more desirable than the acceptance of men. We don’t have to fit the world’s mold to be used of the Lord. He is looking for faithful submission, not cultural acceptance.

III. A Promise Declared (7-8) – Our closing verses reveal the promise John declared to those who listened to his preaching. We see:

A. The Declaration (7) – [And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.](#) John remained committed to his

message. He never deviated from it. He consistently preached the coming of the Lord. He desired to compel those who listened to prepare their hearts and look for His coming.

- John preached regarding the coming of Christ as the Savior of humanity. We continue to preach Jesus crucified, buried, and risen as the sole means of salvation. We also need to faithfully proclaim his imminent return. He went away, but He is coming again!

B. The Deity (7) – *And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.* During his ministry, John garnered quite a following. He had many disciples who followed his teaching. He enjoyed great success as he preached of the coming of Christ. However, John sought no glory for himself. He knew his ministry wasn't about him. The multitudes didn't need to see the wilderness preacher; they needed to see Jesus, the Christ, high and lifted up. He said on one occasion, speaking of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John pointed men to Jesus as the Savior and Redeemer.

- Arrogance and pride are two tactics often employed by the enemy. He seeks to create a sense of pride among men, even those who labor for the Lord. We must see ourselves in light of the Lord's grace and glory. Apart from Christ we have nothing to boast in. He is the one men need to see. I can't save anyone, but I can point them to One who can!

C. The Deliverance (8) – *I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.* John preached of the fulfilment of redemption through Christ. He had the ability to baptize with water, but Christ, in His grace, would baptize them with the Holy Ghost. They likely didn't understand, but John spoke of the indwelling of the Spirit following salvation. Christ came to deliver from sin, providing forgiveness and reconciliation. He alone had the ability to provide what they all desperately needed. John was encouraging those who heard him to look to Christ for salvation and deliverance from sin!

- The church must remain faithful to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. He bore our sin and secured our salvation upon the cross. He endured the righteous judgment we deserved, dying so we could obtain eternal life. We are justified through His resurrection and promised life beyond the grave. Jesus stands as the means of deliverance from sin unto eternal life.

Conclusion: We will discover much as we journey through Mark's Gospel. The theme will be consistent though – Jesus Christ, the servant of mankind and Savior of the world. If you have received Christ in salvation, I hope you are encouraged to proclaim Him to others. If you are yet unsaved, repent of sin and look to Him by faith for salvation.