



# The Scrolls

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## Meeting the Messiah Introducing Jesus!

*Week 1*  
*January 5, 2025*

**Mark 1:1-13**

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### WORD STUDY

#### *Gospel:*

The word literally means “good news” or “proclaiming good news.” It was used in Biblical times as an announcement of a victory in battle and then the details of that victory. It was also used to describe the birth or rise to power of a new king such as Augustus as the new Roman emperor that was going to bring peace and implies emperor worship.

Our gospel confronts this by saying that Jesus has come and that He will bring true and lasting peace and with dying on the cross and rising from the dead that He is King of kings and is the only One deserving of worship.

### LIFE LESSON

**No matter what you are going through there is one who has come that is greatest of all who has removed all obstacles between you and God. We can all rest in that truth.**

### I. VV. 1-8

#### A. V.1

Mark sees the beginning of the gospel to be the appearance and preaching of John the Baptist. The beginning is a messenger with a message about the God-Man Jesus Christ. It is a message that describes salvation through Jesus. The word “gospel” is never a reference to a book but to salvation. The Greek word for gospel “euangelion” was a common word in New Testament times and was usually used to announce the birth or coming of a new emperor or king. It was an announcement of an historical event that was going to bring change and strong implications to the world. The Roman audience that Mark was writing to would have understood this gospel to apply to earthly rulers, but Mark is letting everyone know that there is One about to be introduced that would change the world in a way no ordinary man ever could.

In the Mediterranean culture during the time of Jesus, public authority and social standing were strongly linked to one’s father. Mark wastes no time in establishing where the authority and power from Jesus would come from. He does not lay out an earthly lineage as Matthew and Luke does. Instead, Mark announces up front that Jesus is the Son of God. His Father does not wear a metal crown as earthly kings do but a Heavenly crown that never fades and represents absolute authority over all kings and kingdoms.

## **B. VV.2-3**

By quoting the Old Testament Mark is establishing his own authority. In oral traditions, writers and speakers were given honor if they could quote or use the Sacred Scripture to bring validity to their message. Mark is being creative in verses two and three by melting together Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3 which both taught the same truth but gives an ample explanation.

Mark describes John the Baptist as one who is a messenger that is sent before Jesus and that is preparing His way. This is another comparison to the Old Testament which can be found in Exodus 23:20-23 where the messenger who will lead the people to the Promised Land is not a man but a divine messenger of God. This shows the importance of the message that John the Baptist is bringing. In addition, the Old Testament quotes used from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 were referring to the “way for the Lord” which is God. Here Mark is applying those passages to Jesus showing Him to be God in the flesh.

One other thought about these passages being quoted is that they refer to a “way.” Mark is making the point that Jesus is a practical way to salvation and a relationship to God. To follow Jesus is to find forgiveness of sin and the life of abundance that is promised.

## **C. VV. 4-8**

The baptism of John was unique in that it was a call to show an outward action to an inward attitude. The Israelites would signify their acceptance of God’s covenant by washing their clothes and cleaning themselves with water before entering the covenant presented in Exodus 19:10. In the same way their washing was a symbol of moral and spiritual change needed to enter a covenant relationship with God, the baptism that John offered was showing an attitude of repentance by fully submerging them into the Jordan river.

Repentance was and is a word that means to “change your mind” and “alter your understanding” which shows a rational decision not only to have feelings toward but to act upon the truth of the gospel by personally response. The wilderness was the place in which to do this since it has been a place in the history of the Israelites in times past that God would deal with

them either in grace or judgment. John called them out to the wilderness so that they would have to leave their comforts, traditions, and way of life in order to repent. For the people to leave the city and go to the wilderness would signify that they were leaving their old life to find a new one. We are called to do the same spiritually by leaving our sin behind and our attitude of self-reliance to follow Jesus and the new mind and life He has in store for us.

John's dress and dietary habits were unusual for those times just like they would be for our time today. However, his clothing was a picture of how a prophet would be remembered from Zechariah 13:4 and a picture of Elijah in 2 Kings 1:8. Eating locust was a nutritious meal full of proteins and minerals and was within Jewish dietary regulations found in Leviticus 11:22.

John is not trying to build a name for himself, rather he is pointing his audience toward One who is much greater than himself. A clear picture of this is his statement "I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the straps of His sandals." Untying sandals was a duty for gentile slaves who were considered the lowest of the low in their culture. John wants to make it clear that Jesus is subject of the gospel. Jesus is the good news where sin is forgiven. Only Jesus can give the Holy Spirit which in the Old Testament was a task that exclusively belonged to God so once more Mark is reminding his readers that Jesus is God in the flesh.

## **II. VV. 9-11**

The baptism of Jesus has been seen by the church as the beginning of His ministry. It was such an important occasion that when the apostles were looking for a replacement for Judas, they put the qualification of someone who had been with Jesus since the time of His baptism. (Acts 1:21-22) Mark does not begin his account of Jesus' life with His birth but with the moment His ministry began. John is no longer the main subject of the text because the focus has turned to Jesus. His baptism is not only the beginning of His ministry but also exposes us to three experiences as He came up out of the water. First the heavens were torn open. This is important to the Jewish audience because God had been quiet for four-hundred years leading them to believe that the Spirit had.

## **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

1. Consider that the world had not heard a word from God for four-hundred years. Has there been times in your life where you felt that God was not speaking to you? How does having a copy of God's word affect that feeling?

2. John the Baptist had to prepare the way for the coming of the messiah by removing hinderances from people's lives. Ask yourself if there are things in your life whether in thought or deed that are hindering your walk with the Lord.

3. John the Baptist made it clear that he was not using his platform to boost himself but to promote Jesus above any agenda he may have. Is that true of you? Is the name and glory of Jesus the most important thing in your life and do you use your talents, gifts, and resources to elevate Jesus to others?

4. Have you accepted the truth that the heaven has been opened for you and that Jesus can remove anything in your life that impedes your relationship with God?

5. Have you ever felt alone in a spiritual wilderness where you thought there was no one around to help? Read the last part of Matthew 28:20 and then ask yourself if those feelings are justified.

been absent from their people. Now they can rest assured that the Spirit of God was with them again. The Greek word for "torn open" is only used one other time in Mark's gospel when the Temple Veil was torn from top to bottom after the death of Christ. With Jesus, anything that is separating us from God can be removed so that we have access to the Father.

Second, we see "the Spirit descending on Him like a dove." The Greek tense of the phrase "descending on" is more focused on the union of Jesus and the Spirit and can be translated "descending into Him" as is pointed out in the foot notes of the NLT bible. It is a picture that Jesus is now ready and powered to carry out the work that the Father had sent Him to do.

Finally, we hear "a voice came from heaven." What is interesting is what the voice said. "You are my beloved Son." Throughout the Old Testament only Israel and the king as the leader of Israel was called God's son. But Israel had fallen short of that role so now we see Jesus that will take His role as God's Son and fulfill it. Being called God's Son does not begin a relationship but recognizes one that has existed since eternity past.

### **III. VV. 12-13**

Immediately Jesus is steps out of the water and is drove into the wilderness to pursue the ministry which He had been called to carry out. The temptation will show that Jesus will use His divine position to carry out God's will not pursue His own agenda. The temptation proves that Jesus has a choice and will choose to follow His Father's plan and not be overtaken no matter how strong the temptation. (Hebrews 4:15) During this time Jesus is away from all His friends and family facing this on His own the same way that He will have to face the cross. But seeing that the angels were serving Him reveals that He was not alone after all. In our own times of trouble and temptation we too can rest assured that we are never alone even when we can't see anyone else around us.

The fact that Jesus was away from all people means that no one else knew all this spiritual warfare was going on. Since we have the Bible, we actually know more about Jesus than those who lived among Him. We can read sometimes what He was thinking or see what was going on when no one else was around Him.