

March 3, 2019

Mark 1:9-20

Introduction

Each of the four Gospels in the New Testament contributes to our understanding of the life of Jesus. While there is certainly overlap in the information given about Jesus from all four writers, still, each author contributes their unique perspectives. This allows us to see a broader and fuller picture of the life of our Lord. For the next several weeks, we will be studying the Gospel of Mark together. His perspective deepens our appreciation of the life of Jesus.

Affirmed (Mark 1:9-11). As Mark begins his account, he focuses on the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. In other words, Jesus is already an adult when Mark begins his portrait of the Master. In the passage we are studying this week, Mark sets the stage for the ministry of Jesus by focusing on two preparatory acts: His baptism and temptation. First, consider the baptism of Jesus.

Mark reminds us that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river. The Greek term translated “baptized” here is a term that literally means to immerse. So, John the Baptist immersed Jesus in the water. When Jesus came out of the water, an amazing scene unfolded. Jesus saw the heavens opened “and the Spirit descending on him like a dove” (Mark 1:10). After this, Jesus heard a voice from heaven exclaiming, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased” (Mark 1:11). What a statement of affirmation as Jesus began His ministry.

Tested (Mark 1:12-13). The second noteworthy event which preceded the ministry of Jesus was His temptation. Mark’s description of this account is much briefer than the accounts in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew and Luke, we are told that Jesus resisted three specific temptations from Satan himself (Matthew 4 and Luke 4, respectively). In each instance, Jesus denied Satan by quoting scripture. In Mark’s version, there is no mention of number of times Jesus was tempted. For Mark, the focus seemed to be on the temptation, not the result. However, in the context of Mark 1, we know Jesus survived this experience and came out victorious because, in the next verse, Jesus begins to preach.

Heard (Mark 1:14-15). What is the message that Jesus proclaimed? According to Mark, Jesus preached “the good news of God” (Mark 1:14, CSB). More specifically, this good news is further described by three phrases. First, Jesus proclaimed that “the time is fulfilled.” This phrase indicates that a period of waiting is over. In other words, the beginning of the ministry of Jesus signals something new and different is starting! Second, the next phrase explains part of what is now different. Jesus stated, “the kingdom of God has come.” God’s kingdom certainly had come; and, the representative of that arrival was the Messiah, Jesus Himself. Third, the last phrase of the preaching of Jesus described the intended response on the part of the hearers: “Repent and believe the good news!” Both actions were important. To repent basically means to turn from something. In other words, now that the Messiah had come, people had to turn from their former ways of relating to God. Instead of their former ways, they were to believe, to put their trust in this “new” thing, the Gospel.

Conclusion

Mark's Gospel begins by describing the ministry of Jesus. Jesus is baptized; He is tempted; and, He begins preaching. The message of Jesus is unique because the time historical moment is unique. The Messiah has come and it is time to repent and believe the Gospel.