

W @ K L J P r a J @ r J O u r n a l

**DAILY BIBLE STUDIES**

*“The Beginning of the Gospel”*

**Mark 1:1-3**

**May 17 – May 23, 2009**

**THE LORD'S DAY** –We now begin to look at the text of Mark’s gospel this week. As he starts to write you will notice there is no recounting of the birth of Jesus as in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Mark bypasses the birth record and gets to what he calls “*The Beginning of the Gospel*”. We will look further into this phrase as we continue. Read **Mark 1:1-5**.

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, open my ears to hear and open the eyes of my heart to receive Your Word this week.*

**MONDAY** –Verse 1 begins with the phrase, “*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*” As I mentioned yesterday Mark does not “begin” with the physical birth of Jesus, but rather steps back into time to the Old Testament prophecies announcing the coming of Messiah which end in the person of John the Baptist. The beginning of the gospel is intrinsically connected with the prophetic promises of Sacred Scripture. The two Testaments of Scripture unfold for us the Divine history of revelation. Mark is not saying that the Gospel first began to be preached at this time. The Old Testament is the beginning and source from which the “*gospel*” is proclaimed and prophesied then finally revealed and realized in the person and work of Jesus Christ who is the head of the whole body of those who are being saved. As the “*gospel*” is unfolded in history, it has a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning could be seen as the entire Old Testament, with John the Baptist being its summary and final herald or prophet. Read **John 1:1-8**.

*Suggestion for prayer: Father, thank You that we can turn to Your Word as revealed in the Old and New Testaments and find the gospel of Jesus.*

**TUESDAY** –It is interesting to stop and note the brevity and abrupt way that Mark introduces his writing and gets to the person and work of Jesus. The very first line summarizes the heart of this gospel which Mark seems burdened to unload; the facts that record our Lord's public life. Though followed with a brief recounting of the ministry of John the Baptist these few opening words of the second gospel are enough to show that Mark recognized in Jesus, as did John the Apostle in his gospel, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father (**John 1:14**). Notice this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, “*The Son of God*”. This title is used purposefully, to call men

Lord's Day	Praise & Prayer	ADORATION Hallowed be Your name. (6:9)	AUTHORITY Your Kingdom come... (6:10)	APPEAL Give us this day... (6:11)	AQUITTAL Forgive us our debts... (6:12)	ASSISTANCE Deliver us from evil. (6:13a)	ADMIRATION For Yours is the Kingdom... (6:13)
Mon							
Tue							
Wed							
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Fri							
Sat							

M a t t h e w 6: 9-13

to pay close attention. This is no common history. It doesn't record the deeds of a mere man or of a "hero"; but rather the life and teachings of "The Son of God". This history, therefore, demands and commands respect. Read **Hebrews 1:1-3**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Father, grant that I would see Jesus Christ, The Son of God in all His glory. I praise You Jesus for Your life of majestic perfection.

**WEDNESDAY** –Verse 2 begins with a very familiar phrase found in Holy Scripture; namely, "As it is written". In verses 2-3 Mark takes us back a few links on the chain of Divine revelation to the Old Testament Prophets where he quotes directly from both Isaiah (**Isaiah 40:3**) and Malachi (**Malachi 3:1**) and also seems to reference **Exodus 23:20** where we read of God sending an "angel" before His people to keep them and bring them into the prepared land of promise. John the Baptist is called an *aggelos* (angel, messenger) in the Greek in our text. The church father Eusebius commented as follows to John being called an *aggelos*: "He emerged from the desert clothed in a strange garment, refusing all ordinary social intercourse. He did not even share their common food. For it is written that from childhood John was in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel. Indeed, his clothing was made of camel's hair! His food locusts and wild honey! It is understandable that they should have been alarmed when they saw a man with the hair of a Nazarite of God, and a divine face, suddenly appearing from the lonely wilderness dressed in bizarre clothing, who after preaching to them, he disappeared again into the wilderness, without eating or drinking or mingling with the people? Must they not have suspected that he was a little more than human? For how could a human being go without food? And so they understood him to be a divine messenger, the very angel foretold by the prophet." Tertullian: "Now he called him an "angel" on account of the great consequence of the mighty deeds which he was to accomplish, comparable to those mighty deeds of Joshua the son of Nun about whom you have read. John served in the office of a prophet to announce God's will, as the forerunner of the Anointed One. The Spirit, speaking in the voice of the Father, called John an "angel" in accord with the promise declared by Malachi: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me." It is not a novelty that the Holy Spirit would call those he has appointed ministers of his power "angels." Read **Hebrews 1:4-14**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Jesus, help me to see that You are not just another prophet but rather You are "The Prophet".

**THURSDAY** – Mark also speaks of the "messenger" John the Baptist "preparing the way before You (Jesus)." The King (Jesus) was about to come onto the scene and His herald (John the Baptist) was preparing the way before Him just as in ancient times the Kings envoys would go before the King and make sure the roads and physical travel routes were safe, secure, and

prepared for the King to travel on. We see this even today in our country with presidential motorcades and such as high ranking leaders travel throughout the land and world. The interesting thing in this account is that the way is being prepared in a spiritual sense for a spiritual work which will be brought in with the arrival of The King of Kings. In **Isaiah 40:3** we read, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God". Only God can transform the "desert" and "wilderness" into a fruitful and blessed oasis and this is precisely what is done spiritually in the soul of the one who finds the joy of salvation from his sin in the person of God the Son, Jesus Christ. Read **Isaiah 40:1-5**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Thank You Jesus for bringing me out of the wilderness of sin and giving me new life by Your grace and atoning death.

**FRIDAY** –There is also the call to "make His paths straight" in **verse 3**. We are told that there is to be "preparation" for the arrival of The King. King Jesus will later say upon His arrival, "The kingdom of God is at hand". He then also explains to us what the messenger is pointing to by his call for "preparation" when He continues, "Repent and believe the Gospel" (**Mark 1:15**). It is God who does the work of saving sinners and regenerating dead lost souls but we are told that those who are God's people will be ones who prepare for Him by obediently *repenting* and trusting Jesus to save them. May our prayer be the same as this one taken from an ancient sermon: "The way of the Lord must be prepared within the heart; for great and spacious is the heart of man, as if it were a whole world. But see its greatness, not in bodily quantity, but in the power of the mind which enables it to encompass so great a knowledge of the truth. Prepare, therefore, in your hearts the way of the Lord, by a worthy manner of life. Keep straight the path of your life, so that the words of the Lord may enter in without hindrance." Read **Acts 17:30-31**.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Father, help me to be repentant and believing.

**SATURDAY** –John was "preparing the way" for Jesus by preaching and baptizing those who came to him, "confessing their sins" (**Mark 1:5**). No prophet was greater than John the Baptist, the messenger from the desert, who was called to prepare the way for Christ. His voice cried out for men to repent and "prepare the way of the Lord". Next week we'll see that John's baptism, the actual outward act which the text calls "a baptism of repentance", just prepared the way for the spiritual baptism that would be expressed in the remission of sins that came with the death of the one he baptized.

*Suggestion for prayer:* Father, thank You for this wonderful salvation in Jesus.