

Mark 1:9-13, The Introduction of Jesus
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Overview

1. 1:14-15 is a summary of the chapters to follow, so marks off 9-13.
2. These verses contain three episodes that fill out the terms of 1:1.
 - a) His Baptism introduces him as Christ, the sin-bearer
 - b) His Attestation introduces him as son of God
 - c) His Wilderness sojourn shows his sovereignty over creation: "the gospel," that "the kingdom of God is at hand."

A. 9, Baptism -> Sin-Bearer

Need to pay attention to two details: where Jesus comes from, why he comes, and how he is baptized.

1. **Where** does he come from?

In the midst of the activity described in 1:4ff (note the durative aspect of *egeneto Iwannhs baptizwn*), a particular candidate shows up for baptism. (About 70 miles from Jerusalem to Nazareth; map is about 150 miles high.)

 - a) Geographical emphasis: from Nazareth of Galilee.
 - b) Contrast with 1:5, "all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem."
 - c) John's influence is focused on Judea, the southern part of Israel. From Mark's perspective, Jesus is the only Galilean who makes his way to John to be baptized! (We know from John 1:37ff that the baptist had galilean disciples, including Andrew and John the evangelist, but Mark wants to emphasize the difference.)
 - d) Compare the general movement of Mark, from Galilee in 1-8 to Jerusalem in 11-16. Original ferment of revival activity in the south, under John; then a lone galilean comes, is baptized, and (14-15) returns to the north bearing the message of the gospel.
 - e) But when Jesus returns to Jerusalem, what does he find of all those who were baptized in 1:5? Widespread opposition and rejection; betrayal and death.
 - f) Lesson: Outward response is not sufficient; must be marked by an inward change. Signing a decision slip, going forward at a revival meeting, or even receiving baptism does not in itself save one. Baptism is commanded of those who are already saved, but many have received it and yet remain in their sins.

2. **Why** does he need to be baptized?

- a) Cf. 1:4 "repentance for the remission of sins," 1:5 "confessing their sins." Baptism was for a sinful people.
- b) Why does Jesus experience it? Answer: he is bearing sins--ours. In fact, in John's record of the Baptizer, it is JB himself who first points out that Jesus is "the lamb of God, who taketh away [present tense] the sin of the world" (1:29). The Baptist saw the world's sin already on the Lord's shoulders.
- c) One might in fact see in the baptism of Christ the point at which he shoulders this burden. The gospels are unanimous in beginning Christ's ministry with his baptism by John; cf. Peter's message to Cornelius, Acts 10:36-38, and the great care with which Luke dates the baptism (Luke 3), in contrast with the birth. The baptism is the first recorded incident in which the Lord Jesus takes the position of sinful people.

3. **How** is he baptized? Don't have full details, but note that he goes down into (*eis*) the Jordan, and then comes up out of it. He goes to the water; it is not brought to him. "Baptize" isn't really an English word at all, but a Greek one, meaning "dip, immerse." It is transliterated rather than translated in our Bibles only because of political pressures on the translators from establishment denominations that seek to preserve their own traditions of sprinkling or pouring.

B. 10-11, Divine Attestation -> Son of God

1. Note on "straightway"

- a) Common word in Mark; about 41x. Also translated "forthwith," "anon," and "immediately." Occurs more times in Mark than in all the other gospels (incl. John) put together. (*Online Bible shows 2112 | 2117 as 43 in Mark, 19 in Matt, 10 in Luke, 7 in John, 12 in Acts, 5 in the rest of the NT. Thus more times in Mark than in the rest of the gospels put together. These figures do not correct for places where the words function other than adverbially.*)
 - b) The word creates a kind of multi-media slide-show effect, one image after another bursting on our vision. Gives Mark the role of a tour guide in a rapidly changing setting--"Quick, look here, don't miss this...and now that... and now look here."
 - c) Mark 1 contains more than a quarter of Mark's uses of the term. We are given a series of vignettes to introduce us to the Lord.
2. "he saw the heavens opened." The AV makes Mark sound like Matt and Luke. Actually, he differs from them in two ways.

- a) Mark is present tense, while the others are aorist. "He saw the heavens being opened." As the Lord Jesus looked up, the heavens parted in front of him.
- b) Matt and Luke use a vanilla verb for "open." Mark uses the verb "to rip apart." A sudden, violent action. Points us in two directions:
 - 1) Past, to the nation's request in Isa. 64:1 for a direct intervention of God in their problems (see 63:15-64:5). Mt and Lk in fact use the word from Isa in the LXX, *anoigw*, but Mark comes closer to the semantics of Heb. *QR*(.
 - 2) Future, in 15:38 of the veil in the temple. Only two occurrences in Mark.
 - 3) Thus the Baptism and the Crucifixion round off one another. The first rips open heaven as God sets forth on his work of salvation (Isa 59:16). The second rips open the veil so that man can enter in to fellowship with God. Reinforces our understanding that the ministry of Christ is bracketed by these two events.

3. 10b-11, Heaven's Response to the Sin-Bearer

Note the three elements of the Trinity coming together, like (one speaks reverently) all the members of the family gathering to send a child off to college. This ministry that is beginning has been the object of much planning and preparation from eternity past. Now it is being launched, and the entire godhead joins in setting it forth.

- a) Jesus, here attested as the son of the Father, has been on earth as a man for thirty years (Luke 3:23), but has just taken up the burden of human sin.
- b) Now the Spirit comes upon him in a special way. Though Jesus is God, throughout his earthly ministry he draws on only those resources that his children have available to them. Even the miracles are no different in kind from those done by Moses and Elijah. Having just taken up this tremendous burden, he now enjoys the strength of the Spirit to enable him to carry it.
- c) The Father speaks from heaven to announce his good pleasure in what his son has done, and in so speaking, establishes the title introduced in 1:1, "Son of God." Phil. 2:5-11 is a good commentary on this passage. There, it is because the son has humbled himself as sin-bearer that the Father has highly exalted him.

C. 12-13, Wilderness -> Sovereign

Another "straightway." We are given only a glimpse of this episode, but it rounds out the introductory expansion of 1:1.

1. 12, The Spirit, the one who has just come upon him, now drives him into the wilderness, hardly a pleasant place. A warning to us not to expect the HS always to do things that we initially might consider pleasant.
2. 13, what happens there. Matthew and Luke focus on the temptation, but it is only one of three things that happen to Jesus--three parallel clauses, each in the imperfect tense. Mark emphasizes rather how this sojourn shows the Lord Jesus' superiority over three ranks of created beings, and thus demonstrates the arrival of the kingdom of God, which is the "gospel."
 - a) First demonstration: he is tempted by Satan. The prince of the demons comes against him, and cannot move him.
 - b) Second demonstration: he is with the wild beasts, yet they do not harm him.
 - c) Third demonstration: the angels minister to him. *10:45, his place was not to be ministered to, but to minister. Nevertheless, he receives ministry from the angels, and (1:13; 15:41) from women!*