

The Incarnation

Mark 1

October 29, 2017

We begin our study of the gospel of Mark, finding Jesus to be both fully human and fully divine. The first half of Mark's gospel emphasizes Jesus as our king, while the second half of Mark emphasizes the cross of Christ.

DAY 1: The divinity of Jesus

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

1. Mark immediately introduces us to Jesus right at the start, using two titles to help us understand that Jesus was not just a man, even a great one.

2. The first title is the word, "Christ," a Greek word indication "Messiah." The term also indicated "king," but in the case of Jesus meant, "The King." (He was not just another political king of Israel).

3. The second title, "Son of God," was a bold claim of the divinity of Jesus.

4. The "incarnation" means "in the flesh." Theologians use the term to describe how God "came in the flesh," taking on human form and becoming fully human. (See Philippians 2:5-11)

5. After Peter spent time following Jesus, learning from Him, and watching teach and interact with people, he drew the same conclusion about the nature of Jesus.

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

6. When the high priest was interrogating Jesus he was also trying to discover if Jesus was just a man or if he was divine.

Matthew 26:63 ...The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

7. What strikes you from these beginning verses?

DAY 2: Jesus, the prophesied and long-awaited Messiah

Mark 1:2 It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"—

Mark 1:3 ... "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

Mark 1:4... And so John came ...

1. On the heels of calling Jesus both “Christ” (Messiah) and “Son of God,” Mark then quotes the prophet Isaiah, written about seven hundred years prior to Jesus’ incarnation.

2. Mark equates John the Baptist with “a voice” of one calling in the desert.

3. The message of the “voice” is repeated by John the Baptist (John in v. 4).

4. John’s message is the same as the that of the “voice” in Isaiah. The Lord is coming! Mark is not only showing the divinity of Christ, but also connecting the long-awaited prophecies of Messiah’s coming with that of Jesus. It is another way of introducing the incarnation, that of God becoming flesh.

5. The linkage ancient Jewish prophecy reminds us that the purpose of God in redeeming rebellious man, the promise that God Himself would provide a solution for the perplexing problem of human sin! This promise is repeated throughout Old Testament history, over the course of about two thousand years.

6. What we call Christianity was not just some “start-up” religion. The God-provided solution to the human-initiated problem of sin was planned even before mankind was created.

7. What strikes you from Mark 1:2-3?

DAY 3: The revelation of the triune God

Mark 1:8 "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰ As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert,

1. The bible is the revelation about God: who He is, His purpose, His workings in the world, His character and the nature of His being.

2. Throughout scripture we get glimpses of what theologians call the trinity.

3. The nature of God is one Being, three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Our finite human brain cannot comprehend this aspect of the nature of God.

4. Our passage today is one of those indicators of the trinity.

5. The **Holy Spirit** is pictured as a dove. In the creation account, the Holy Spirit "hovered over the face of the water." He was there at creation. The gospel of John tells us that **Jesus** was the agent of creation. (John 1:1-18). And **God the father** is creator.

6. All three persons of the trinity was involved in **the creation** of the world.

7. Likewise, all three persons of the trinity were involved in **the redemption** of the world.

8. What strikes you about the trinity?

DAY 4: The core nature of the Trinitarian God: other-centered relationship

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1. We don't just learn about the truth of the Trinitarian nature of God. We also learn the essential nature of the Trinity, the relationships between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. The baptism of Jesus represents the beginning of His ministry. The prophecies have been written, the incarnation occurred at Christmas at the birth of God the Son. The three-year ministry culminating in the death of Christ on the cross is coming. It is at this pivotal moment in the redemption story, that Father, Son and Spirit are together for us to see.

John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

⁵ *And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

3. The core nature of the trinity is not only relational, but a kind of relationship where each One seeks to honor (glorify, bring glory) the others. This is illustrated in the baptism story.

4. Jot down every instance where you see one member of the trinity seeking to honor (encourage, glorify) one of the others:

5. What do you sense in God's the Father's heart as He speaks to Jesus?

6. Mark records that at that moment heaven was "being torn open." The Holy Spirit, in heaven could not constrain Himself at this moment. He had to encourage God the Son. His invisible presence was represented as a dove so that human beings might "clue in" to what was going on amongst the trinity.

7. The implications for us are the most profound of anything ideas. At the core of existence is not just a god, but a triune, relational God whose modus operandi is to be other-centered, to be a blessing to someone else.

8. His redemption of fallen, sinful man is to create the life of Christ, this same nature in the hearts and lives of His children!

DAY 5: The initial temptations of Jesus

Mark 1:13 ... and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

1. The reality of life is not that of garden, but of battle.
2. Satan's temptations are meant to turn us away from God, to trust ourselves instead of God, and to look after our own needs as primary, rather than look to God for our primary needs to be met.
3. Satan even tempted Jesus.

4. Mark doesn't tell us any details about Satan's temptation of Jesus, but Matthew does:

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

² *After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*

³ *The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."*

⁴ *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

⁵ *Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.*

⁶ *"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"*

⁷ *Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*

⁸ *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.*

⁹ *"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."*

¹⁰ *Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"*

¹¹ *Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

5. Of Satan's three temptations (verses 3, 5-6, and 8-9) what do you think Satan was trying to get Jesus to do?

6. What do you notice about Jesus' response to all three temptations?

7. How do you try to deal with temptations in your life?