

# THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

## MARK 1

Text:

Introduction:

### **1. THE MESSENGER**

The Jews needed some good news badly because God had not spoken to them for 400 years, and these years were terrible years.

The promise land had dwindled in size and importance. A pagan roman governor (Pontius Pilate) ruled.

But good news came at last.

John the Baptist was the voice of this good news.

God had promised that a messenger would come.

#### **Malachi 3:1**

<sup>1</sup> Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

#### **Isaiah 40:3**

<sup>3</sup> The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the

way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

We read in verses 3-4:

**Mark 1:3-4**

<sup>3</sup>The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>4</sup> John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

## **2. HIS MANDATE (2-3)**

**Mark 1:2-3**

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. <sup>3</sup>The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

In ancient times, kings often sent people ahead of them to prepare the way for their coming. The forerunner had two primary duties.

First, he was to make certain that the roads were passable. There were to be no delays when the king passed through. He was to have a clear, open route through the kingdom.

Second, the forerunner was let the people know that the king was coming. He was to go along the route before the king came through and he was to tell the people to get ready for the king.

John the Baptist fulfilled both duties seen in the ancient forerunner. He came to this world with a divine mission. John was given a heavenly mandate, which he fulfilled while he was here.

#### A. Preparation

John cleared the way for the coming of the Lord by appealing directly to the people. The Jewish religious leaders had long ago forgotten the common man. John came preaching to the people, calling on them to repent because the Lord, the King was coming to deliver His people.

#### B. Proclamation

John was a lone voice against the dead legalism of the Jews. He was a hard preacher in a dark day and God used him to touch a generation.

Note:

John the Baptist preached during a time when the Jewish religion had become nothing more than dead orthodoxy. Legalism and ritual ruled the day. The Jews were in desperate need of a spiritual revival. The Gentiles had given up on religion and viewed most religious beliefs as superstition and foolish tales. Both groups needed just what John preached: the Truth!

We are living in similar day! Many churches have abandoned the great doctrines of the Bible to preach either a message rooted in humanism or legalism. People are either never challenged regarding their sins or they are beaten down with the Word of God.

There is a great need for men of God in our day who will stand up, open their Bibles, open their mouths and preach the Word of God. Jesus is coming soon! Where are the forerunners who are preparing the way of the Lord and proclaiming His return? Preachers, our mandate is that same as the one John the Baptist received. We are to preach the Word.

## **2 Timothy 4:2**

<sup>2</sup>Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

## **3. HIS METHOD (4-5)**

### **Mark 1:4-5**

<sup>4</sup>John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. <sup>5</sup>And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

#### **A. John's preaching (4 b)**

John was a preacher! He came telling men of the need for repentance. His message was a message of confrontation. John came confronting sin and calling on

people to repent. The word “repentance” means “a change of mind that results in a change of action.”

#### B. John’s practice (4 a)

John did something else that was unusual in his day, he baptized Jews. People in that part of the world had been practicing baptism for a long time. When a Gentile became a Jewish convert, that person would baptize themselves as a symbol of their changed life. Baptism was not new, the way John used it was.

John did not baptize people to make them right with God. The phrase “preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” does not mean that people were being baptized to have their sins forgiven. They were being baptized because their sins had been forgiven. They went to John and were immersed into the river Jordan to declare publically that their lives had been changed by the power of God. They were baptized to give glory to the God Who had forgiven their sins and made them whole. In other words, this baptism was about a change of life!

#### C. John’s power (5)

We are told that many of the people living in that region came to John the Baptist to be baptized. These people made a break with their past and were changed by the power of God.

## 4. HIS MANNER (6)

### Mark 1:6

<sup>6</sup>And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

#### A. His fashion

John didn't wear the fine robes that the Pharisees and the Sadducees wore.

He didn't gravitate toward the finer things in life.

His clothing was as rough as his message.

He was a man of the desert and he dressed like a man of the desert.

He was out of step in his fashion sense.

#### B. His food

He shunned the fine foods of the palace and ate the foods of a desert dweller.

He got his honey out of the rocks and lived on such things as he could trust the Lord to provide.

He was a common man who did not seek after the allurements and attractions of this world.

John was a man who was satisfied with the basics of life.

Note:

John's manner was as unusual as his message. John the Baptist was an odd man, even in his own day. Imagine how this man must have appeared to the people who saw him. He was a Nazirite, Luke 1:15. That means that his hair and his beard had never been trimmed.

He stepped out of the wilderness dressed in the rough garments of a prophet. He came to the people of Israel with the same spirit of confrontation that dwelt in Elijah 800 years earlier. He came preaching with power!

John came with a strange appearance. He came with a strong message. He was out of step with his times, but God was with him. God used John the Baptist in an amazing way to carry out a powerful ministry.

If John teaches us anything, he teaches us that we don't have to fit in with this world.

He teaches us that it is all right to be different. We can dress different. We can talk different. We can live different.

And, it does not mean that we are weird; it simply means that we have a desire to walk with the Lord and honor Him.

It's all right if you don't live as the world lives. It is all right if you do not do the things the world does. It is all right if you don't drink, cuss, do drugs or run wild. It is all right if you go to church three times or more a week; pay your tithes; go to Sunday School and live like a Christian.

We should never allow this world to force us into its mold.

### **Romans 12:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* <sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

### **2 Corinthians 6:17**

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

## **5. THE MESSAGE (7-8)**

### **Mark 1:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down



and unloose. <sup>8</sup> I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

He did not preach to build up his name and his reputation. John preached to point people to another. He preached to point men to Jesus.

### A. Message of a Humble Servant

John the Baptist was a bold preacher. He thundered out against sin and called for people to repent. But, when he began to talk about Jesus Christ, John became a very humble preacher. He tells the people who heard him preach that compared to Jesus, he was a nobody!

He tells them that he isn't even worthy to do the job of the lowest household slave. John says, "I am nothing, but He is everything!" John says, "I didn't come to call people to me; I came to point people to Him!"

One of the reasons people refuse to deal with their sins. People often compare themselves to the wrong standard. If you look around, you can always find someone who lives worse than you do.

But if you honestly compare your life to Jesus Christ you would see how we fall short of the glory of God.

## B. Message of a Holy Saviour

John told them that when Jesus came He would do a spiritual work in their hearts.

John was not calling people to religion. They had enough of that. John the Baptist was pointing people to a Savior Who could save their souls, forgive their sins and change their lives.

Close:

The message John the Baptist preached was an unusual message. He did not preach to gain the favor of men. He did not preach to grow a great ministry. He did not preach to attract a crowd. He preached a simple message about a wonderful Savior named Jesus. He preached a simple message about the need for people to deal honestly with their sins. He preached a message that those people needed to hear and he preached a message that we need to hear as well.