

# The Blueprint of the God's Plan

## Աստուծոյ Ծրագիրը

### Mark 1:1-13

Last week Badveli Kevin gave a great introduction of the Gospel of Mark.

Just to emphasize some points:

- Mark, also known as John-Mark, went back home to Jerusalem during the mission trip with Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13). We don't know why he went back. It was a tough trip, maybe? Personality differences, maybe? Who knows, the Bible does not say.

- In the second mission trip of Paul and Barnabas, Mark appears again. And now Paul and Barnabas have sharp disagreements. Barnabas takes Mark with him, while Paul takes Silas, and each goes in a different direction (Acts 15).

- Mark's relationship with Peter is extremely important. He becomes Peter's scribe, hearing from him the events and putting them in writing. Just imagine, Mark learning from Peter. Peter refers to as, "**my son Mark**" (1Peter 5:13).

- One thinks that Mark and Paul's relationship was over. No way. We find that Mark returns to Paul and serves him in prison. (Colossians 4:10).

Paul calls Mark a fellow worker (Philemon 1:22).

Paul was waiting for his execution in Rome. He writes to young Timothy saying: "**Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.**" (2 Timothy 4:11 NIV)

God shaped both Paul and Mark. What a lesson of humility...

Don't give up. God does not give up from us. He did not give up from **Jonah**.

Our author Mark, God used him. Here we are reading the Gospel according to Mark in the year 2022.

### -The first verse is the title of this entire work:

**"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."** (Mark 1:1 ESV)

Now the next 12 verses are a prologue to this gospel: (three parts)

(1) Scripture quotations and the appearance of John the Baptist (1:2–8)

(2) The baptism of Jesus of Nazareth (1:9–11)

(3) The temptation of Jesus the desert (1:12–13).<sup>1</sup>

## **(1) Scripture quotations and the appearance of John the Baptist (1:2–8)**

The first section describes John the Baptist and his ministry which is **the divine fulfillment of the divine prophecy**. (Like John's Gospel, behind the scenes one can see God the conductor of this orchestra).

There is no birth story, nativity scene, shepherds, stars and so on. Mark has no interest in listing Jesus' human credentials.<sup>2</sup> Mark does not want us to miss divine dimension of Jesus' nature.

**The gospel of Jesus Christ.** (Jesus the human- Christ the divine) **the Son of God,** (the Messiah.)

### **-Quotation from the Old Testament**

<sup>2</sup> **As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,**  
**"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,**  
**who will prepare your way,**  
<sup>3</sup> **the voice of one crying in the wilderness:**  
**'Prepare the way of the Lord,**  
**make his paths straight,'" (Mark 1:2-3 ESV)**

Mark lays a great foundation starting from the OT:

**1. Exodus 23:20,** God will send his messenger before the Israelites on their exodus to the Promise land.

**2. Isaiah 40:3,** this is the second exodus through the desert to the final deliverance.

**3. Malachi 3:1,** God will send a messenger to prepare the way before him prior to the coming of the judgment day.<sup>3</sup>

By quoting these verses Mark reveals of the OT promises (**Torah, Major and Minor Prophets**); **the divine fulfillment of the divine prophecy**.

God continues the history of saving humanity. (AMEN and AMEN AND AMEN)

### **-The messenger is preparing the way**

<sup>4</sup> **John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."**  
(Mark 1:4-8 ESV)

-**John the Baptist** appears as the fulfillment of those promises. Mark is not interested giving us details of John's background as the other gospels did. Mark quickly introduces John the Baptist's message.

A. Repent, repent from your sins, get baptized.

B. He is preparing the way for a person mightier than him, who will baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

A. The Israelites needed repentance. The chosen people were not in tune with God. In fact, they were not happy (Pharisees) that John was baptizing them with water. Please notice in the OT, only gentiles needed water for baptism, not the Israelites, e.g. (Elisha tells general Naaman to be washed in water, 2 Kings 5) **"To call all Israel to baptism implies that in some way all Israel is defiled."**<sup>4</sup>

B. Preparing the way for Jesus.

I love John's humility. "...**the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.**" Shoes these days are fun stuff. People pay a lot of money and buy famous brands. Back in those days sandals were dirty, and no one wanted to clean, or touch them. Only slaves did that. John is drawing the picture of how mighty and powerful the person is who is coming.

How interesting, that both died in the hands of "mighty" authorities.

John is saying, "Don't get excited about me. Get excited about the One I'm pointing you to, the One who is the Messiah, the One who is the Son of God."<sup>5</sup>

## **(2) The baptism of Jesus of Nazareth (1:9–11)**

**<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."** (Mark 1<sup>9-11</sup> ESV)

Why was Jesus Baptized? Will talk about it...but..

What kind of entrance is this?

It does not look like a Super Bowl entrance. Right?

Who care who comes from Nazareth, Galilee? Such an unnoticed place.

John was telling **"After me comes he who is mightier than I"**. Is this man mightier than him?

The crowd knew about John the Baptist. He was “a celebrity.” Wearing strange clothes like Elijah. They came from all over to see him.

Unlike Matthew, Mark does not explain why Jesus came to be baptized (in Matt. 3 we read: **Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**)

Mark does not give us a theological explanation, but he describes what happens after the baptism:

**immediately he saw the heavens being torn open ...**

Is God telling them and us some important news?

Are we having access to God?

“More accurate than referring to our access to God would be to speak of God's access to us. God comes whether we choose or not.”<sup>6</sup>

**God is at work;** the divine voice of God is ready to penetrate history and to reveal his righteousness over us. (Three times God speaks in the NT; this is one of them.)<sup>7</sup>

Like the big Curtain of the Temple that tore apart so that we have direct access to God, God in His turn tore the heavens to tell us the good news: **“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

And it was addressed to Jesus: You are my beloved Son...

**Affirmation from God, who Jesus is.**

No wonder Jesus was baptized. The man without sin, submitted himself to all our laws and regulations.

R.C. Sproul says:

“His task as Messiah was to submit himself to every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, to obey every dimension of the law in full, to keep every requirement that God had given to his people. So, even though He was not a sinner, He sought to submit to baptism to identify with John the Baptist and the rest of sinful humanity, in order to fulfill all righteousness.”<sup>8</sup>

### **(3) the temptation of Jesus in the desert (1:12–13)**

**<sup>12</sup> The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.** (Mark 1:1-13 ESV)

Only in two verses Mark explains that Jesus faced the Devil. Interestingly, right after God’s affirmation and baptism, Jesus is led to go to the desert, to the test zone.

Mark does not indicate the three temptations that Jesus had which is reported in the other gospels. Mark does not say Jesus won over the devil. But the outcome is that even wild animals cannot harm him, and angels were ministering to Jesus.

In other words:

“The devil, the beasts, and the angels all acknowledge in their own way that Jesus is the one who brings God’s victory.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Application:**

Mark, Paul, Peter, all of them had “desert” experiences.

The wilderness.

God did amazing things to the Israelites in wilderness.

Mark the author experienced his own wilderness in his life.

Peter’s life was full of suffering. (read 1<sup>st</sup> Peter.)

Do you know that when Mark wrote this Gospel, (probably around 65 AD) Nero (Rome) blamed the Christians for setting a big fire in Rome. (Nero was the one who burned Rome)

I want to mention that Mark’s Gospel was written when Christians were put in extreme persecution. (*I read some of them and I cannot even describe them to you*).

So what is this gospel telling us:

Notice, the main point of this gospel:

**“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”** (Mark 1:1 ESV)

The foundation and the main theme of this gospel.

We just finished 10 Words. Again, main theme was that we could not keep the law **without Jesus**.

We live in this crazy world, with upside-down values. **We have the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Warning, you may face the “desert- wilderness” when you come closer to God though our Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point in your life, you may be living on the mountain top or facing some kind of wilderness. Wherever you are, remember the Son of God has been there before. He is with you. He is there to uphold you.

Stay focused... stay connected...

1. David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary*, Mark P 41

2. *ibid.* P55

3. *ibid* P43

4. *ibid* P 45
5. R.C. Sproul, *He Thought Them as One Who Had Authority Mark*, P 6
6. Juel, *Mark*, 34. Juel writes (*A Master of Surprise*, 34–35): “Viewed from another perspective, the image may suggest that the protecting barriers are gone and that God, unwilling to be confined to sacred spaces, is on the loose in our own realm.” (from NIV Commentary on Mark P 48)
7. In the NT, the first time we see God speaking is in Mark 1:11; also during transfiguration Mark 9:2-7; and in the Gospel of John in answer of Jesus’ prayer God the Father says: “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” John 12:28
8. R.C. Sproul, *He Thought Them as One Who Had Authority Mark*, P 9
9. David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary*, Mark P 55