

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Lecture 2, Mark 1:1-13

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This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the book of Mark. This is session 2 on Mark 1:1-13.

Hello again. It's good to be back with you as we are working through the gospel of Mark. At our last lecture we looked at some of the background materials, discussed the genre of gospel, and some of the historical considerations regarding gospels. But today I'm excited because we actually get into the gospel of Mark.

We're going to start a little bit by talking about the structure of the gospel of Mark before we begin looking at the first part of chapter one. And there are different ways to do the structure of Mark. Some want to do it geographically, some see a theological movement.

For me, I think the best explanation is four basic parts. That you have a prologue, Mark chapter 1, verses 1 through 13. That's what we'll be primarily looking at today, followed by the next section, a fairly large section, beginning with verse 14 of chapter 1 and going to the middle of chapter 8, 8:21.

The confession of Peter in the middle of chapter 8 has been long recognized as a hinge, as a major turning point of the gospel of Mark, and that's reflected in this structure. This second part, if you will, after the prologue, really has been described as Jesus' public ministry, also his authority ministry. By that I mean the theme of the authority of Jesus coming into view.

And I think both of those are correct. There certainly is a public aspect to these first eight chapters. A lot of what Jesus does is in the view of other people in their houses or in the synagogues.

There's a Galilean focus as well during these first eight chapters, and a lot of the topics that are covered, as we'll see, really do address the question of Jesus' authority. And then there's a shift that happens in the gospel of Mark at the confession of Peter when Peter is pressed upon who he thinks Jesus is. There, we see not only the geography that has started to change.

By that I mean we start getting that move towards Jerusalem. But we also see a thematic shift in the gospel of Mark where the suffering and the death of Christ become much more prevalent. Even the teaching begins to focus more on the disciples.

And so, this third part, titled Jesus Turn Toward the Cross, and then there's an epilogue in chapter 16, verses 1 through 8. Now, as we talked about in the last lecture, Mark's ending is a bit controversial, with regard to where it ended or where it didn't end and what we have. So, this epilogue in verses 1 through 8 is probably held with a little bit of an asterisk regarding that structure. So today, we're going to be primarily looking at the prologue, Mark 1 through 13.

As we look through the prologue, one of the things I want us to begin to capture an idea of are the topics and themes that are being introduced in the prologue. The beginning of a book will often orient us towards what the book, the main of the book, will be about. Also, I want us to pay attention to how much is covered in such a brief time.

We talked about last week the pace of Mark and how Mark moves very quickly. But in moving very quickly, he also slows down a lot. And so, one of the things I think we're going to see here is Mark will cover in 13 verses what Matthew, for example, takes close to four chapters to cover.

We get a lot of summary statements in the prologue. We get a lot of information that almost seems as if this is assumed knowledge. Key elements of the story of Jesus, but also those elements that would have been readily known.

So, we get John the Baptist introduced, but we don't get a lot on John the Baptist. We get the baptism and a key moment there, but we don't get the conversation that occurs surrounding the baptism. We get a reference to the temptation narrative, but we don't get the full description of what happened in the wilderness.

In this prologue, Mark moves through large chunks of material that Matthew, Luke, and John spend more time on, to the point that eventually, he slows down. There's this almost tortoise-hair kind of pace. He moves very quickly, like a rabbit, and then he slows down like a tortoise.

And this slow-down pace is what we'll look at in the next lecture on Mark 1. But let's look at what we have here today. And so, starting with the prologue, we get to the first three verses. The beginning of the good news about Jesus, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah, the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare your way, a voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him.

It is probably worth mentioning here verse 1, where it says the beginning of the good news. This is that Greek word we talked about last time, euangelion. But here it's not good news, gospel in the sense of a genre, but really of a proclamation, that aspect.

So, it's the beginning of a proclamation. Some argue that verse 1 is talking about the entire book as a way of introducing the entire book, the beginning of the good news, that is, the Gospel of Mark. I think, though, that what we see here with verse 1, the beginning of the good news about Jesus, the Messiah, probably really covers what John the Baptist does.

That the beginning of the proclamation is Mark's way of discussing that the proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, begins essentially with John the Baptist. And I think one of the reasons for this is notice that it's the beginning of the good news about Jesus, Jesus Christ, some translations Jesus the Messiah, Christ being an English transliteration of the Greek word Christos, Christos being the Greek word for Messiah. And so that's where that comes from.

And what's important to note is the reference to Jesus here. It's the beginning of the proclamation of the good news about Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Messiah. So, it isn't the sense of the beginning of the good news, the beginning of the proclamation about the Messiah in general, or the promised Messiah in some sort of big conceptual way, but it's very particular.

The proclamation about Jesus, the specific man, begins with John the Baptist. I think that is where Mark is located. The proclamation that this Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, really begins with John the Baptist.

With John the Baptist pointing to this particular person. And so, I think that's what is happening there in verse 1. And then, as wouldn't be unexpected, we see John the Baptist here associated with a biblical text. It was written in Isaiah the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare your way.

A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. I'm going to come back to that a little bit. I want to talk a little bit more about that text and about John the Baptist.

Because this is, as you know, all four gospels begin their story. There's a key element to John the Baptist in their story. And so, it's probably useful for us to talk a little bit about just who John the Baptist was and how this passage that is being referenced refers to him.

This Isaiah passage is actually more than just Isaiah. We think we have two, possibly three, passages in the Old Testament that are being put together and presented in this text. One is a combination of Exodus 23:20, the first part of verse 20, along with Malachi 3:1 and then Isaiah 40, verse 3. The reason we think the Exodus passage might be in view is that, in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, which we would call the Old Testament, the Greek translation of that from this time period is referred to as the Septuagint.

In the Septuagint, the start is almost verbatim, with God promising to send an angel ahead of the Israelites in the wilderness. So, we think Exodus 23:20, the first part of verse 20, might be in view here. In Malachi, the messenger in question, which incidentally is identified as Elijah later on in Malachi 4.6, but here in Malachi, which is part of this passage, prepares for the final eschatological coming of God to cleanse Israel and to judge the wicked.

This Elijah identification indeed we'll see as we get into Mark 9 that Jesus will identify John the Baptist as this eschatological prophet, as this Elijah figure. We'll talk more about that. But one important note in Malachi, in the Malachi reference, the passage reads, prepare my way.

Whereas in Mark, it's changed to prepare your way. So this I think is an important change that has occurred. I think Mark is telling us something very profound in ascribing to John the Baptist this text, but changing the Malachi text to read prepare your way instead of prepare my way, that he's saying something about Jesus in relationship to God.

Whereas it is God saying in Malachi prepare my way, here the pronoun is associated with Jesus. And so, there's this sense that the eschatological coming of God, the return of God, the culmination of the plan and time of God's great work, the coming of cleansing of Israel and judging the wicked, that this is occurring with the arrival of Jesus. Of course, the dominant root of this passage is Isaiah 40, verse 3. And Mark is stressing Isaiah here.

Now, he's not wrong to say this is from Isaiah and not mention Malachi or even possibly the Exodus passage, though that one's a little less sure. It would have been well within common practice to sort of locate within the dominant reference and cite Isaiah as the sort of primary referent for this passage. Those who had heard this would have readily heard Isaiah 40 and would have also heard Malachi and would not have considered Mark to be doing anything strange here.

In fact, Isaiah, the great message of Isaiah, that message of the suffering servant, the eschatological redemption, the new Exodus language that we see all over Isaiah 40, the final deliverance, is a strong part of Mark's gospel. And so, anchoring the arrival of John the Baptist to Isaiah 40, even though there is a conflation with other passages, makes a lot of sense. Now, when we think about John the Baptist, it's probably worth spending just a little bit of time on him because of the significance that he was historically, especially to the world of the New Testament.

Jesus claimed John the Baptist in Matthew 11 was more than a prophet. Talks about how he was the greatest. Unlike all the other figures of the New Testament, only the deaths of Jesus and John the Baptist are given significant treatment.

John the Baptist had many followers. In fact, if you read Acts, Paul comes across some people who are still following John the Baptist and are confused or maybe incomplete in their information. Jesus, as we know, was baptized by John.

Jesus' message is very similar to John about the arrival of the kingdom. John the Baptist is used in the gospels to compare and contrast with Jesus. In a lot of ways, it is the greatness of John the Baptist that is used as the foil to show the even surpassing greatness of Jesus.

There are suggestions all over the place, which we've already talked about, about the Elijah, eschatological Elijah, this expected figure that would come to prepare the way. John the Baptist's death is a key part of Jesus' ministry. Mark will sort of cite it as the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

Luke tells us much about John the Baptist born into a priestly family, to older parents. There was a miraculous conception, if you will, just in the sense that Elizabeth and Zechariah were considered too old to have children, and yet they became pregnant with John. There have been a lot of arguments suggesting that John might have had a connection with a community known as the Qumran, the community near Qumran.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are associated with it. Part of that connection stems from the fact that Isaiah 40, verse 3, was an important part of that community and that there seemed to be some diet and clothing connections. But I think this is largely more coincidental than causal.

Early Judaism was full of messianic hope at this time, and that took a variety of forms, and it's not unexpected to see verses like Isaiah 40 get applied to different groups. A couple last little final notes before moving on. John the Baptist, some things we know about him.

He was in the wilderness. He attracted great crowds. He baptized.

There was a symbolic act of water baptism. It's easy to see, given his crowds and given his message, that there was a messianic potential that developed around him. Though we need to be clear, he never made such claims about himself.

John the Baptist was very clear that it was Jesus. When we see his clothing, what he wore and with the hair, and what he ate, this is very much in keeping with the prophets of the Old Testament, where what you wore, what you ate, what you did, there was a teaching parabolic effect to it. So it wasn't that John the Baptist was some sort of madman in the wilderness, but rather he was communicating a message in everything that he did, both the locale of where he was, where the

wilderness has a strong Old Testament focus, but also in the clothing that he had, which one actually has some interesting hair connections with mantle connections in Elijah.

There might have even been an overt Elijah reference there in terms of some of the clothing. But there was, I think, a judgment that was being conveyed in his clothing and in his food about the greed and the opulence that was happening among the rulers of Israel. So he was making a statement there as well in what he was wearing.

There's also much of John the Baptist's message was that judgment was coming. That with the arrival of the kingdom would come judgment upon those who had been standing opposed to God and those who had been, the rulers especially of Israel, who had been taking advantage of their position in the name of God. In fact, the other Gospels play this out quite clearly.

Of course, the most known insult in the Bible is when John the Baptist calls the approaching religious leader a brood of vipers and asks who warned them of the coming doom, almost wanting to know why they would even be there in the first place. But here's a little bit about John the Baptist, and I think it's important for us to consider John the Baptist in terms of how Mark is presenting him. With John the Baptist, we have this figure that draws a connection between what God had said would occur, the coming of the suffering servant of Isaiah, and the coming of the one, the eschatological arrival of God.

That moment that was anticipated is now coming to fruition. And so, we see in John the Baptist an organic connection being made to what God had done in the history of God and his people and what God was now doing with the arrival of Christ. And I think we also get a very important statement, an informative statement, if you will, of how Mark will be talking about Jesus, and we get that in verse 7. So, this is John the Baptist speaking, and this was his message.

After me comes the one more powerful than I. And then he continues, he explains the extent of that with the thong of whose sandals I'm not worthy to stoop down and untie, a very shameful, low act to do. But this is the first sort of description on the lips of someone in the Gospel of Mark, on a person, about who Jesus is. Notice it's after me that the one more powerful than I comes. The stronger than me one would probably be a really good rendering of the Greek text there, where stronger is sort of the descriptor that's being used.

And so, John the Baptist, when he speaks of Jesus, he says, the stronger than me. This really sets the stage quite well for what we will see Mark doing with the authority of Jesus, how, over and over, we're going to be finding these references to Jesus' strength and Jesus' authority. So, in Mark, when he's covering the arrival of

John the Baptist, he keeps it very brief, but he does associate it with the one who would prepare the way and he does associate it with Jesus' strength.

And the last thing Mark reminds us of in verse 8 is John saying, I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. It's interesting that there's a lot of debate on exactly what John's baptism was. And I think it's fair to say it doesn't seem to be the same type of baptism that the early church would then profess.

The reason I say this is because John's baptism—repent and be baptized—has some similarities to that, but John seems to be speaking to the people of Israel about the need for this sort of corporate repentance. And the question becomes, how does water sort of fit into that? There have been various theories. Some have argued that this is similar to what the Qumran community would do with Gentile proselytes. Again, I don't think that's as strong.

But to be fair, we don't have a plethora of parallels to what John was doing. In other words, John doesn't seem to be doing a practice that was a common, well-known practice of which we can say, ah, this is what John is doing. So, what are we to make of his baptism? Well, if John is operating in a similar way to the Old Testament prophets, meaning his clothing, his mannerisms, his food, and his location are all part of the message, then I think that is probably where we are to best understand his baptism.

That his baptism, there's something symbolic occurring with the water baptism that's consistent with his message. One of the things we see in his message, as I mentioned earlier, throughout the Gospels is that judgment is arrival, the time of judgment has come, and the ax is at the root. The water, then, might best be understood not as a purification ritual of cleansing or washing but perhaps is best understood with the other symbol of the idea that water often conveyed, which would be judgment, which would be chaos, which would be doom, the flood, if you could think of that imagery, perhaps, from Noah was judgment as well.

And there might be this idea of John calling upon the people to confess that they are worthy of judgment, that they have been a disobedient people, and then symbolically going into that judgment and then coming out, depicting sort of grace of God or mercy of God. That would fit with his message of repent of your sins. It's interesting, again, I don't know if we'll ever know exactly what his baptism was doing.

I do think the fact that Jesus agreed to be baptized helps us here. When Jesus agrees to be baptized, Mark doesn't tell us much about the conversation between Jesus and John, but Matthew does, and there is this sense where Jesus is affirming and agreeing that it is right for him to be where our sinner belongs, perhaps under

judgment, and then anticipating the cross. Again, this is some suggestion for some things for you to think about.

But John compares his baptism with what? Or with the baptism of spirit that Jesus will do. And there's some references, I think, here to Isaiah 4 and Isaiah 11, as well as Ezekiel 26, 39, Joel 2, the idea of the revival of the Messiah and the spirit and the presence of the spirit in a unique way. So, the expected Messiah and the presence of God's spirit coming together were anticipated and looked toward.

So, in a lot of ways, I think John is pointing to this reality. But also, if you think of the spirit in a similar way to we think of water, that the arrival of spirit, where if water was symbolizing judgment, but also sort of coming out of judgment, perhaps, in that baptism, we might see the same with the spirit, with the arrival of spirit, that there is both the presence of God, which has a judgment quality to it, but also the presence of the protection and the arrival and the comfort. But whereas water, I think, is symbolic for John, what John is saying is that spirit is not.

It's authentic. That this is not a metaphor that John is using, but declaring the eschatological reality of it. It's interesting just to think about it.

One of the things, of course, that is so maybe frustrating with Mark is Mark doesn't tell us much more. He just presents it very briefly. Again, there's almost this assumption that maybe this is assumed knowledge.

Maybe these are those key elements of the story of Jesus that the early church knew and needed to be mentioned. That one couldn't start the story of Jesus without the story of John the Baptist. Looking again, then, if I would, at these sort of key ideas, I think there are two main ideas at work here in these first eight verses of the prologue.

One is that Jesus is being presented as the fulfillment of the history of God and his people. That the great story of God, the great story that Isaiah was pointing to, and if there's a hint of Exodus and Malachi, that that great story is now coming to its pinnacle. That there's something significant about to happen in the hinge of history of God and his people.

Also, that Jesus, as I said, is the stronger one and his authority and his power. In these first eight verses of the prologue, these are sort of the two things I would have us keep in mind. Moving on a little bit here now as we continue to think about the prologue, I want to look at verses 9 through 13.

At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open

and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. A voice came from heaven, you are my son whom I love with you I am well pleased.

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan. He was with wild animals and angels attended him. Again, very common element to the story of Jesus, a known element, but I think there's some very important interpretive notes here.

By the way, even the way it begins is interesting with verse 9. At that time some translations in those days it kind of shows that Mark isn't doing a pure biography here. He's skipped over large chunks of time and he is anchoring it within a time period if you will. Those days I think then referring to Jesus' earthly ministry.

Those days I think is referring to that. Of course, Jesus comes from Nazareth. The only reason we know anything about Nazareth at all is because Jesus came from there.

This was an unknown, irrelevant town. The Old Testament and Talmud don't mention it.

Josephus doesn't mention it. The New Testament mentions it. This gives us, I think, historiographical evidence.

If one were to create a story in which they wanted to elevate the hero, you wouldn't locate them from Nazareth. You might stick with Bethlehem. Bethlehem had a prophetic reference to it.

We know Jesus was born in Bethlehem. You might even generally speak of Galilee, but Nazareth, you wouldn't. I find it fascinating that Nazareth now is probably one of the most well-known ancient towns.

Why? Because that is where Jesus came from. Interesting enough, the only reference we have in history to people's opinion of Nazareth is in John chapter 1 when Nathanael mocks it and wonders why anything could come from there. So, we have this beginning of Jesus' ministry.

He comes from a very humble beginning in Nazareth. He's baptized by John in the Jordan. Then notice this baptism, what occurs here.

Just as, again, this just as, you see a lot of this just as immediately and then. That's part of that pace that Mark keeps driving us on. Just as he was coming up out of the water, he, meaning Jesus, saw the heaven being torn open.

It's fascinating language here, torn open. The words that are being used are the idea of a fabric being torn. The English word schism comes from the Greek word that is being used here, this rending if you will.

What's interesting, the reason I point that out is because that is not the language that Matthew and Luke use. Matthew and Luke speak of the heavens being opened like a door might be opened or a door might be slid. Where Mark speaks of the heavens being torn.

Fascinating change. And I don't think it's accidental. We have, of course, places like Isaiah 64 1, oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you.

But this rending language isn't simply pulling from Isaiah here, but I think it's anticipating the next moment in the Gospel of Mark where we're going to see the same term used, and that's in Mark 15 verse 38 when it is the veil that is torn open. The veil that separates the temple, the Holy of Holies, from the rest of the complex, and that happens at the death of Christ. And this is not, I believe, accidental because, in a second temple cosmology, it was frequently considered that the heavenly sphere, the heavenly space, was separated from the earthly sphere by a veil.

That there was this great cosmological fabric, if you will, that separated the two. And in fact, the construction of the temple and the design of the temple was done so to reflect that. The veil that would separate the inner from the outer and then there was even another veil, was rendered with symbolism.

Symbolism of creation, symbolism of the cosmos, the idea that almost of a redoing of the Garden of Eden in symbolic form was sort of presented into the design of the temple. Let me make my point here. The priests, for example, their vestments, when they were outside of the inner sanctum, when they were, in other words, in the earthly realm, their vestments often had symbols on them that conveyed creation.

That sort of depicted, if you will, the sphere of which they were working, in which they were ministering. But when they passed through the veil, into the inner area, they changed their vestments to all white. Now, it sort of indicated they were in the heavenly.

They were in a unique place that had a heavenly location. And their vestments were accorded. And so, when did they change their clothes? For lack of a better way, when they passed through the veil.

Philo picks up on this idea when he talks about the Divine Logos and he speaks of how the Divine Logos, this figure that's a theoretical figure, would pass through the veil and take on elements of creation. The point being, this rending of the heavens

and the rending of the veil in the temple are two ways of saying the same thing. That what was kept separate has now been torn.

And so, there's an apocalyptic quality to this, of revelation that is occurring. But these are these interesting bookends. And if I might, there's even another element that connects these two.

In this first reading, the rending of the heavens, God speaks and declares something about Jesus, which we'll look at about Jesus' Sonship. In Mark 15, when this veil in the temple, the earthly temple, is separated, is torn apart, it occurs at the same time that there is another confession of who Christ is. This time not by God, this time by a Roman guard considering the death of Jesus and saying, surely this man must be the Son of God.

So, you have symbolic and actual separations being, that was separated, being now rendered. And you have dual confessions, one by God, one by man. And even more fascinating is, when we look through the Gospel of Mark, we'll see, is that so often, when someone makes a confession about who Jesus is in the Gospel of Mark, they are told to be silent; they are rebuked, they are corrected.

Mark has chosen these elements, I think, for literary reasons, because they build attention. All of a sudden, the only time that someone seems to get it right is when God speaks. When anybody else speaks, they're either demonic or in error until we get to the Roman Centurion.

And then all of a sudden, we have a confession about who Jesus is that is not corrected, that is not rebuked, that is not silenced. It is as if Mark is asking the reader to become, to want to know, when is it okay to say who Jesus is? And it's at the cross that he's building towards this, and he does it using this tearing language, this significance. Looking here then at what is stated, what occurs, you have first the coming of the Spirit.

We've talked a little bit about this already. Isaiah 11, verses 2 through 4, speaks of the coming Messiah as one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord will rest, indicating total dependence on God, but the coming of the Spirit being part of that Messianic identification. So, you have here this arrival of the Spirit, where you have God the Father, the arrival of the Spirit resting upon Jesus, I think is done for purpose of saying that what was predicted has now come.

Of course, you have the Son, so there's this Trinity picture here, as well as the ministry of Jesus about to begin. You have this dove reference, which is fascinating. The dove is probably to be understood adjectivally, not adverbially.

By that, I mean it descended as a dove, looking like a dove, not in the manner that a dove descends if that makes sense. Why here? Maybe there's an echo of the salvation of Noah's story, perhaps, that there is this idea of, again, water being judgment, the dove being salvation from judgment. Perhaps there's this picture coming out here.

If so, then that would support my thought that John the Baptist's message and his baptism had destruction judgment overtones to it, that Jesus takes destruction upon himself to bring salvation to God. And then, of course, you have this great declaration by God, the voice of God speaking. Notice in Mark that Jesus hasn't done anything yet, which means that this sonship, this revelation of sonship, is not on the basis of Jesus' deeds but on the basis of who he is.

And the reason I make that point is because being declared the Son of a God was not an unknown reality in the ancient world. In Judaism, for example, in ancient Israel, you would have angels being said to be sons of God, you would have kings being sons of God, you would have Israel itself being a son of God. And each of those had an obedience motif to them, unique entities set apart to obey God in a specific way.

And I think a lot of that is what is informing who Jesus is. But even in the Greco-Roman world, you had references to emperors being sons of God, great heroes like Alexander the Great when he is in Egypt, is declared to be a son of God. Caesar Augustus takes the title upon the death of Julius Caesar, his adopted father.

But when a Greco-Roman figure became declared a son of a God, it was often on account of the great deed that they had done, usually upon their death, sometimes in the middle of great accomplishments. But here we have a declaration of Jesus' sonship, and Mark hasn't done anything yet, anything of significance. So it's a declaration of who he is on the basis of who he is, not on the basis of what he has done.

And then the voice from heaven, which would be God speaking, says, where am I at here? Oh yes, you are my son. This is verse 11, whom I love. With you, I am well pleased. That you, by the way, is emphatic.

There's a stress that's put on it, the way the Greek is constructed there. And there's a quote of, again, several passages like we saw at the beginning. We have Psalm 2-7 here, which is a Davidic enthronement psalm, a declaration of the Messiah, the Davidic dynasty.

The beloved language could be a hint of Genesis 22:2. The beloved language doesn't come from Psalm 2:7. But of course, Isaac, God says of Isaac to Abraham, your only son, your beloved, your only son whom you love, suggesting, if this is right, that there's a possible Jesus-Isaac connection being drawn here.

And even more so of an analogy of willingness to sacrifice, of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, and God's willingness to sacrifice his son. And then the I am well pleased with you comes from Isaiah 42:1, where God's chosen one, the part of the larger servant song, is selected as an individual who will give himself as a sacrifice. What this means here is in this declaration that God has at the baptism, which I believe occurs at the baptism because what is happening at the baptism reflects why Jesus is here, which is to go to the place that belongs to sinners where judgment is occurring, and then pass through those waters to bring salvation, that in making this declaration at the baptism, God is combining enthronement language, saying yes, this is the Davidic Messiah, this is the one who is to come, and this Davidic Messiah is also the servant who will be sacrificed.

Like Isaac, the beloved son, the servant who will be sacrificed. It's a fascinating, powerful declaration. We move through quickly here on the baptism after this revelation by God of who Jesus is, and Mark is very brief here.

We don't know from Mark who heard what. We know that Jesus saw and Jesus heard. But then at once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.

So, we have immediately that the first thing that occurs at the end of the baptism is obedience to Jesus. Being led by the Spirit into the wilderness would have had Israel motif to it. They were led into the wilderness by the Spirit when they were coming out of Egypt.

Matthew makes a large deal out of Jesus' Israel language. And I think there's Mark is bringing this a little bit as well. So, he's led by the Spirit into the wilderness where he fasts for 40 days.

Again, the number 40 is not insignificant. Mark, though, just tells us he was tempted for 40 days by Satan. Don't miss that.

The first adversary presented in the Gospel of Mark is Satan. He's presented before religious leaders, before Herod, before others. The adversary that is presented is Satan.

We will see that play out time and time again, especially in the exorcisms. And then we have this fascinating little bit that only Mark tells us is that Jesus was with the animals as well. And a lot has been wondered about why the animals here.

The angels attending to Jesus is picked up elsewhere, but not the animals. Mark's just trying to show that how the animals are typically a threat in the wilderness. They are not a threat to Jesus.

That he'll be protected, it's possible. Is this a hint of Eden? Where are the animals and the second Adam, if you will, here together? Or is this just Mark being historically accurate and knowing that the animals attended to him in a manner similar to what Elijah attended to? We don't know.

I find the addition of wild animals to be important in this sense because I think it speaks to the historiographic quality. And I lean towards thinking here we have a picture that life around Jesus is as it should have been before the Fall. That around Jesus, the effects of the Fall are being undone.

I think we'll see that in the healings, for example. And of course, it is not just the effects of the Fall are being undone, but the cause of it as well, which we'll get into. Last bit about the prologue before we end is notice again how much has been left out.

You might have noticed that several points during today's lecture, I mentioned Matthew brings this up, or John brings this up, or we know from Luke. It is because so much of these events we actually, when we think of what we know about Jesus, we don't get from Mark. We get from Matthew and from Luke and from John.

That's part of Mark's pacing strategy. We've been moving very quickly. What Mark does in a few verses, Matthew does in chapters, and we're about to come up to a point where Mark slows down dramatically, where he will use the same number of verses to talk about a single day that he used to talk about the arrival of John the Baptist, John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus, and the moving into the wilderness.

The same amount of verses that he will use, of which two of those verses are just biblical text, three of those verses are biblical text quotations, the same number of verses he uses for that he will use to talk about a single day. There's something about that single day that Mark finds important for understanding who Jesus is. We'll get to that the next time.

Thank you. Let's go to chapter 1, verses 1-13.

This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the book of Mark. This is session 2 on Mark 1:1-13.