

1. **Introduction:** Last lesson we ended with a discussion of the events at Jesus' baptism with particular focus on the voice from heaven that declared, *"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*
2. **What is the Significance of the Statement from Heaven:** No prophet was identified as a Son of God.
 - ◆ Abraham was identified as a friend of God (Isa 41:8), Moses as a servant of God (Dt 34:5), Aaron a chosen one of God (Ps 105:26), and David a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14).
 - ◆ Only the nation Israel (Ex 4:23) was ever called God's Son. Israel failed to be godly. Jesus takes Israel's place.
 - ◆ Jesus not only speaks and acts for God but speaks and acts as God. He forgave sins (2:5), called tax collectors into discipleship (2:13), healed (1:40ff.), cast out demons (1:24).
 - ◆ He declared Himself Lord of the Sabbath (2:28), challenged the religious establishment about oral traditions (7:1ff.), about the Temple (11:12ff.) and the Sanhedrin (14:61ff.).
3. **What is the Source of Jesus' Authority:** After His arrest, Jesus was questioned by the Sanhedrin who asked Him, *"By what authority do you do these things?"*
 - ◆ Jesus responded with His own question causing His questioners to have to think about His baptism (11:27-33).
 - ◆ The meaning and significance of what Jesus does as God's servant is grounded in who He is as God's Son.
 - ◆ Jesus' baptism confirmed His Sonship as well as the beginning of His time as God's suffering servant.
 - ◆ You might think that Jesus' baptism would lead to a celebration, but that is not what occurred.
4. **Mark 1:12-13:** *"The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³And 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."*
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit who had descended on Jesus at His baptism now *"drove Him out"* to confront Satan in the wilderness.
 - ◆ God's Son must confront God's adversary.
 - ◆ The imagery is reminiscent of the scapegoat loaded with the sins of Israel and expelled into the wilderness (Lev 16:21).
 - ◆ The haste and immediacy of Jesus' temptation right after His glorious baptism create a sense that there is no time to linger in the glory of the baptism.

- ◆ Without a moment for further preparation, Jesus must begin the ministry for which He has been endowed.
 - ◆ The passive voice (“*being tempted by Satan*”) shows that Jesus is without doubt the target and Satan the aggressor.
 - ◆ The Spirit who empowered the Son for ministry tests Him to determine how He will use his divine Sonship.
5. **The Big Question:** Will Jesus use His divine Sonship for His own advantage, or will He submit Himself in obedience to God?
- ◆ The temptation of Jesus is not presented as an unfortunate circumstance or as a hardship resulting from a lapse or failure on Jesus’ part.
 - ◆ That which happened to Jesus in the wilderness is as divinely orchestrated as what happened to him at the Jordan.
 - ◆ Jesus’ baptism, as previously noted, is something God did to Him. Likewise, His temptation is a necessary corollary to His baptism, lest Jesus be imagined a divine clone having no choice or desire of his own.
 - ◆ The temptation establishes the free, sovereign agency of Jesus, who, like all human agents, must choose to make God’s will his own.
 - ◆ Like all human agents, Jesus could either choose or refuse to make God’s will his own.
 - ◆ By choosing to obey God, Jesus resisted the alternative and opposite choice posed by Satan, God’s supernatural enemy.
 - ◆ Mark’s use of the name, “Satan,” underlines his personal agency. He controls legions of subordinate “demons.”
 - ◆ As God’s adversary, Satan endeavors to subvert God’s reign as it is manifested through his beloved Son.
 - ◆ Jesus’ first miracle (1:21-28) and parable (3:27) are against Satan as “*the strong one.*”
6. **1 John 3:8:** “*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*” Mark voices the same theme.
- ◆ The forty-day trial of Jesus in the wilderness is consistent with the concept that Israel failed its mission as God’s Son. Jesus has replaced Israel to accomplish what they failed to do.
 - ◆ Israel was in the wilderness forty years (Dt 8:2), Moses was on Mt. Sinai forty days and nights (Ex 34:28), and Elijah was led for forty days and nights to Mt. Horeb (1 Kgs 19:8).
 - ◆ In each instance the wilderness was a proving ground, a test of faithfulness, and a promise of deliverance.
 - ◆ In the wilderness, Jesus is both tempted by Satan and attended by angels.

- ◆ The wilderness as a place of testing and deliverance may explain Mark's reference to Jesus being *"with the wild animals."* Perhaps the wild animals are symbols of horror and danger in the vast, untamed Judean wilderness.
7. **Mark 1:14-15:** *"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*
- ◆ Mark seldom provides time and place designations, but he does in 1:14 at the commencement of Jesus public ministry.
 - ◆ When John was betrayed, Jesus returned to Galilee. Mark cites the return as signifying the start of Jesus' public ministry.
 - ◆ It is remarkable Jesus chose insignificant Galilee, not the great Jerusalem, in which to begin His ministry.
 - ◆ In terms of popular appeal, it is in Galilee that Jesus enjoys his greatest success (1:28; 3:7). It is also where Jesus, after His death and resurrection, gathered his dispersed, defeated followers (14:28; 16:7) to recommission them for ministry.
 - ◆ In contrast to Galilee, Mark depicts Jerusalem as being a place of unrelieved faithlessness as well as a place of opposition from temple and religious leaders.
 - ◆ Galilee, despite its insignificance, is a place of promise and opportunity for the gospel.
 - ◆ The gospel can be effectively proclaimed and known in adversity and suffering. It does not require ease and comfort.
 - ◆ Jesus announces, "good news" (1: 14) in the context of the arrest and eventual execution of the righteous John.
 - ◆ John is the forerunner of Jesus not only in his message but also in his arrest, suffering, and death.
 - ◆ While Jesus proclaimed the gospel, He also was the gospel.
 - ◆ Early Christians referred to both the message of Jesus and the message about Jesus as the gospel.
8. **The Meaning of Proclaiming the Gospel:** Jesus' proclamation of *"the gospel of God"* signifies that the reign of God foreseen by the prophets has arrived.
- ◆ Verses 1:14-15 summarize Jesus and His message. The whole of Jesus' life and teaching is caught up in the concept of *"the kingdom of God."*
 - ◆ The kingdom of God takes its initial shape from Israel's concept of God as king (Ex 15: 18; 1 Sam 12: 12; Ps 5: 2).
 - ◆ As creator of the universe and all that is in it, God is exalted above His creatures, rules over all, mocks gods of wood and stone, and controls the destiny of all things.

- ◆ While God's reign is manifested in Israel's history in the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, was to be supremely manifested in Messiah whose reign would usher in the eternal and heavenly reign of God.
- ◆ Jesus affirmed this description of the kingdom of God but denied other contemporary conceptions of the kingdom.
- ◆ The usual view was God's kingdom depended on Him, but its arrival depended on human righteousness and obedience.
- ◆ Jesus boldly teaches that entering the kingdom of God is in fact to enter a new state of being.
- ◆ The kingdom of God cannot be entered through human effort.
- ◆ It is a mystery (4: 11) that cannot be deciphered or calculated and is best spoken of in analogies or parables (4:26, 30).
- ◆ At present the kingdom is hidden but Jesus says is "at hand."
- ◆ Its future manifestation will be in power and glory (9:1; 14:25, 61). Entering God's kingdom is a matter of urgency.
- ◆ The rich and confident have interests that make it difficult for them to find entrance (10:23-25).
- ◆ Whereas the poor, insignificant, and outsiders – even children – have reasons to sincerely seek the kingdom (10:14-15). The contrite and sincere stand on its threshold (12: 34).
- ◆ Not only is the kingdom of God the substance of Jesus' teaching (1:15), but it also corresponds to and is identified in the closest possible way with his own person and ministry.
- ◆ In this definitive moment of history, the kingdom of God is personally present in Jesus of Nazareth. *"The time is fulfilled."*
- ◆ Paul calls this *"the fullness of time"* (Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10), the critical or opportune moment when God brings the time of prophecy, as represented in the quote from Isaiah, to a close and inaugurates the final phase of history.

9. **What is Next:** Begin with Mark 1:16.