

Mk. 1:9-13 "Preparing the Messiah"

For the Children: When soldiers in ancient times went out to fight in an arena, first the area was prepared, then the fighters. Men would help the fighters strap on their armour and ready themselves, and speak words of encouragement. So God prepared the area for Jesus by sending John to make the people long for forgiveness. Then He made His Son ready to fight Satan by having Him baptized by John, sending His Spirit upon Him and expressing His support. Then He sent His Son out to do battle with Satan in the wilderness. This also tested how ready Jesus was to suffer to save us. He was perfectly ready, and went on to do just that – to save us by defeating the devil and sin and death on the cross. **Questions:** How did Jesus undo Adam's failure? Why did Jesus need the Holy Spirit? How do these verses encourage us?

Introduction:

First Point: The Preparation of Baptism

- 1) Baptism by John: John's baptism implied the need of repentance and warning of judgement (Mk. 1:4, Mt. 3:11, Lk. 3:3). John's location and appearance and diet reinforced that point
- 2) Jesus Baptized by John: John tried to prevent Jesus being baptized by him, because he could not see how judgement and repentance applied to Jesus (Mt. 3:14). In Mt. 3:15 the Lord explains that it was necessary at this time, to fulfill all righteousness. For as John recognized, Jesus was the "Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn. 1:29). Christ did so by taking the sins of the elect upon Himself – which is why He receives a baptism that speaks of judgement and repentance. At this time, at His Messianic "inauguration," He showed His willingness to take this task upon Himself. This baptism implies the cross! It is His "mission-statement" as He begins His work
- 3) Later Baptisms: John baptized with water, but could not change hearts. Jesus submitted to John's baptism to point to the cross. His death and resurrection entitled Him to send His Spirit to "baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Mk. 1:9), to change hearts. This resulted in the effective cleansing that our current baptism speaks of

Second Point: The Preparation of God's Approval

- 1) The Spirit's Descent: Immediately after His baptism, Jesus saw heaven open and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Him – indicating God's approval. The "dove" may allude to Gen. 1:2 or 8:8 – a new creation or peace after judgement. The Spirit anointed Him, to equip Him (as man) for His Messianic office. See Ps. 45:7, Is. 11:2, 61:1f. The Spirit remained to characterize all His work after that (Lk. 4:18, Mt. 12:28, Acts 10:38, Mk. 3:29, Jn. 14:16-17) – essential preparation for His work
- 2) The Voice of Approval: God also voiced His approval by claiming that Jesus was His unique Son – THE son, THE Beloved. See Ps. 2:7, Is 42:1 for background. V. 11 is literally "in Whom I was pleased" – Jesus wasn't adopted into the Godhead at this point, God was pleased to elect Him for this unique role from before time

Third Point: The Preparation of Testing

- 1) Humiliation Tested: Immediately He was driven by the Spirit further into the wilderness – as the Spirit caused the Judges to fight Israel's enemies (Judg. 3:10). He was tested as to His willingness to endure humiliation, in the form of temptation, deprivation, confrontation with Satan, danger from wild animals etc. \in a place that symbolizes God's judgement. 40 days implies a thorough test. See Ex. 24:18, Ps. 95:10, 1 Kgs. 19:8. This was like Adam's testing, only harder, since Christ had to undo Adam's work. The attacks by Satan would continue up to the cross (Lk. 4:13)
- 2) Help Indicated: After, Jesus was ministered to by angels (v. 13). This indicated that while the humiliation would continue, so would God's approval and help. So we see all 3 Persons of the Trinity committed to this plan to save us, by Christ identifying with sinners – from start to finish. This is our guarantee of help and of victory in our struggle with Satan and sin. That guarantee comes from God, not from our abilities

Conclusion: