

Did the action of the Holy Spirit and the voice from Heaven (the Father) affirm Jesus' baptism at the hands of John the Baptist? Explain.

What does this description of Jesus' baptism experience say to the readers about this Jesus from Nazareth?

What power is upon Him?

Does He operate with the approval of God?

Q10. What do you notice about Mark's very brief description of Jesus' wilderness experience in 1:12-13

Q11. If you had never heard or read anything else about Jesus before, what impact would this prologue and introduction have on you?

If you were reading this part of the Bible with an interested friend what exciting thing might you help them see and listen out for?

Q12. What is God saying to you personally through studying this scripture?

Studies in Mark's Gospel

1. The Best News Ever

Mark 1:1-13

From the best information available to us, John Mark is the author of this Biblical book. He was a companion of the Apostle Peter and served as a "servant of the word" who put the apostolic tradition into written form. Possibly after earlier editions, this gospel was written from Rome after the fire of Rome in the Summer of AD 64 and the death of Peter and Paul under the subsequent Christian persecution instigated by Emperor Nero.

Mark writes to establish that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and to convince the reader that they might believe in him, be baptised and be saved (Mark 1:1; Mark 16:15-16). He states his glad tidings (the Gospel) at the very beginning and presents the accumulated and plain evidence for it throughout. The followers of Jesus (especially Peter) become personally convinced by chapter 8 (see 8:27-30).

Mark was the first to write this form of biblical literary genre (Gospel) in the Bible. Luke explicitly says that he used other's work. There is clear literary dependency between the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). John's Gospel seems to be from quite an independent tradition.

Q1. The word "gospel" (glad tidings) was associated with the birth of emperors in Roman times. An inscription in 9 BC referring to the emperor Octavian (Augustus) reads "the birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of joyful tidings which have been proclaimed on his account". Read Mark 1:1.

How important was Mark saying that Jesus was for the world?

Did the way that Mark (and the other Gospel writers) share the Gospel differ from the way that we share the Gospel today?

Should we share the Gospel by getting others to read a Gospel and perhaps read it with them?

Q2. Why do you think Mark begins his gospel with John the Baptist?

Who does Matthew start his Gospel with?

Who does Luke start his gospel with?

What beginning does John start his gospel with?

Q3. How important is the work of preparation if the Gospel is to be received as it is meant to? 1:2-5

How did John the Baptist prepare people for the reception of the Gospel?

Q4 The lost world is likened to a wilderness in 1:3, 4 and 12. Why do you think the world is likened to a wilderness rather than a civilised society?

Q5. Water baptism was not normally practiced by Jews but by repentant gentiles who were wanting to become Jews.

What was John saying by calling on Jews to be baptised?

What did it mean was happening that crowds of people were being baptised?

Was this the beginning of a new movement?

Q6. When a person got baptised what two things was John the Baptist saying it must mean? (See 1:4-5 and 1:7-9)

1.

2.

Should we be baptised? Why? Why Not?

Have you been baptised in this way?

Q7. What superior ministry does John say that Jesus will have? 1:8

How would this have made them feel? Curious? Excited? Expectant? Ready for something out of the ordinary?

Q8. Jesus was baptised by John (1:9)

Did this affirm John's ministry and movement?

Did Jesus have to repent of sin? Why did He get baptised?

Q9. Read 1:10-11