

**Introduction:** The greatest Christmas gift of all is the gift of Christ THE King. Christ and Messiah both mean Anointed in English. In Israel, men were anointed by a prophet of God to serve His people as kings (1 Samuel 16:1-13). But, Yahweh Himself anointed His Son to rule over the ends of the earth; and, to bless all who take refuge in Him, while warning those who reject Him of destruction (Psalm 2). \*\*\* From all this, people must realize that although the only way to enter and remain in God's Kingdom on earth now and heaven forever is through the gift of Christ THE King, Savior of the world (John 4:42); there is a requirement attached to the gift. All gifts must be received. Entry into, and continuing life in, God's Kingdom, Jesus' Church, and salvation from sins, requires people to continuously repent (turn away from self and self-centered desires) and to fully trust God IN Jesus in any and all circumstances God sends their way. \*\*\* Our text from the beginning of The Gospel given through Mark illustrates all these truths and more. People must confess their sins as proof of repentance. In addition, ten days after Jesus returned to the throne of the universe with the Father, they both gave the gift of The Holy Spirit to all living in the faith of Jesus (Acts 1-2). All children in God's family must walk (or live) in The Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16-26; Romans 8:1-17). \*\*\* Our Psalm portion teaches that all who live IN The Three-in-One Covenant God are protected and guarded by Him and spiritual beings He commands. \*\*\* Now, let's look at how these words of promise and command work themselves out in our everyday lives.

**I. John prepared the way for Christ (Messiah) by baptizing of repentance to forgiveness of sins; and, Jesus is baptized, tested, and preached Good News of God. (Mark 1:1-15)**

A. John came to prepare the way for Jesus Christ through baptizing of repentance to forgiveness of sins; John said He is mighty and will baptize in Holy Spirit. (*Verses 1-8*)

1. Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God: As it has been written in Isaiah, the prophet. (*Verses 1-2a*)

**Gospel:** By the time Mark wrote this account of Jesus, from Peter's account to him as his spiritual son (1 Peter 5:13), he knew about over twenty-five years of work Jesus had done through His Church.

2. Behold! I am sending My messenger before Thee, who will prepare the way for Thee: voice of one shouting out in the wilderness, 'You all must make ready the way of The Lord; straight, you all must be making the paths of Him'. (*Verses 2b-3*)

**Messenger:** Mark gives the prophetic background for John's ministry by quoting what a messenger would speak before God sent the One to comfort His people with forgiveness of sin (Isaiah 40:1-11).

3. It was John: the one baptizing in the wilderness and preaching baptism of repentance to forgiveness of sins. (*Verse 4*)

**Repent to forgiveness:** No one can be forgiven until he or she turns from himself or herself, and his or her selfish desires and acts, to God in desperate humility.

4. And was going out to him all the land of Judea and all those of Jerusalem; and all were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. (*Verse 5*)

**'All' Jews:** All does not mean 'each and every', but most people from every region of Judea and most people from every quarter of Jerusalem.

**Confessed sins:** Their confession of their sins as they are being baptized is proof of their repentance.

5. John had been clothed with hair of camel and money-belt of leather around his loins, and was eating locusts and wild honey; and, he was preaching, 'He is coming, One mightier than me, after me, of whom not I am being worthy, having stooped down, to loosen the strap of His sandals'. (*Verses 6-7*)

**Lifestyle:** John was an ascetic, someone living a simple and disciplined life focused on God.

**Coming Mighty One:** The content of his preaching was about the coming mighty One.

6. 'I, even I, have baptized you all with water; but, He Himself will baptize you all in The Holy Spirit'. (*Verse 8*)

**Holy Spirit:** After the Pentecost after He returned to His Father, Jesus Christ fully filled everyone who believed in Him with The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit 'seals' believers into Jesus' Church (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5).

**Application:** Because of this we must all seek to be continuously filled with The Holy Spirit!

B. Jesus is baptized by John and The Spirit descends on Him and His Father speaks; after being tested, He preaches Good News of God, commanding repentance and belief. (*Verses 9-15*)

1. In those days, He came, Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee; and, he was baptized in the Jordan by John. (*Verse 9*)

**Jesus baptized:** While many Jews were being baptized by John (Yah = grace), Jesus was also baptized.

2. At once, coming up out of the water, He saw being torn in two the heavens; and, The Spirit, as a dove, descending upon Him; and, voice came from the heavens, 'Thou art being My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-disposed'. (*Verses 10-11*)

**Trinity:** Jesus is baptized, The Holy Spirit descends on Him as a dove, and the voice of His Father pronounces a blessing on Him. There are three distinct persons named here; but, they are altogether involved, as one, in this baptism!

3. At once, The Spirit is taking Him into the wilderness, and He was being in the wilderness forty days being tempted by the adversary; and, He was being with the wild beasts and the angels were ministering to Him. (*Verses 12-13*)

**Holy Spirit:** As soon as The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, He was led by The Spirit into the wilderness.

Mark can make people dizzy with rapid scene changes. Mark uses *at once* eleven times in chapter one, and forty times in the Gospel. The Holy Spirit led Jesus to be tested and tried by the adversary!

**Application:** We must learn and accept that being filled with The Holy Spirit is often followed by trials and tests.

Whatever Jesus experienced on this earth, His followers should also expect to experience. But as His followers, we have hope because He overcame, and will help us to overcome IN Him (John 16:33).

**Beasts and angels:** The adversary pitted wild beasts against Jesus, but His Father provided angels.

We will see more about the protection of angels later.

4. After John (was) handed over, Jesus came into Galilee preaching The Good News of God. (*Verse 14*)  
**Preaching Gospel:** The Gospel is Good News. Jesus was telling the people in the region of Galilee about the character and deeds of The Covenant God. Note: The earliest manuscripts only have God; 'Kingdom' was added after one hundred years.
5. 'It has been fulfilled, the time; and, it has come near, The Kingdom of God: You all must be repenting, and you all must be believing in The Gospel'. (*Verse 15*)  
**Kingdom:** Christ THE King is declaring the nearness of God's Kingdom in the person of Himself.  
**Two required responses:** Two things are commanded, or required, to be in God's Kingdom. First, people must repent (as John had been preaching). Second, people must believe the Good News about the Three-in-One God, including everything about Jesus Christ and The Holy Spirit.

## II. Jesus calls two pairs of fisherman brothers and they follow Him; those living in Yahweh Most High will be protected from many dangers. (*Mark 1:16-20; Psalm 91:9-12*)

- A. Jesus calls two pairs of fisherman brothers to follow Him and they respond by leaving their nets and father to go after Him. (*Mark 1:16-20*)

1. Passing on, beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting fishing net into the sea because they were being fishermen. (*Verse 16*)

**Sees casting net:** Commercial fishing was done by casting a large net from the boat before the sun came up because fish could not see the net in the darkened night waters.

2. Jesus said to them, 'Come after Me, and I will make you all to become fishermen of men'. (*Verse 17*)

**Call:** 'Come after Me' is the same as 'follow Me'. Jesus promises to make them become something they are not because He will change them to become new people because they will be with Him. He had previously declared Himself THE King. He now calls Simon and Andrew to Him.

### **God's Son is The King who calls followers to Himself**

3. At once, having left their nets, they followed Him. (*Verse 18*)

**Response:** The brothers immediately left behind the nets they used to catch fish in the Sea of Galilee because they knew Jesus would give them new 'tools' when Jesus made them new men, able to 'catch men' to follow Him, because they were now following Him.

**Application:** We must learn to continually repent and have faith IN Christ THE King to follow Him so He will change us to be made able to call others to follow Him.

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4. Having gone on a little, He saw Jacob, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother also; them in the boat, mending their nets. (*Verse 19*)

**Sees mending nets:** It was now daylight. They were on shore for the day, mending their nets for another night of fishing.

5. At once, He called them (to Himself). (*Verse 20a*)

**Call:** Jesus called Jacob and John to Himself immediately because they were on shore and near Him.

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6. Having left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, they went after Him. (*Verse 20b*)

**Response:** Peter and Andrew left their fishing tools behind. But, Jacob and John left their father and the family business to 'go after' Jesus. In other words, they responded to the call of Messiah THE King by following Him.

### **God's Son is The King who calls followers to Himself**

- B. Those living in Yahweh Most High are protected from evil and plague; and, are guarded in their ways and lifted over obstacles. (*Psalm 91:9-12*)

1. Because Thou, Yahweh, my refuge / The Most High thou have made the habitation of thee. (*Verses 9*)

**Living:** This passage is addressed to all people who have responded to The Most High Covenant God by choosing to live in Him as their refuge, their shelter from danger.

2. It will not befall thee, evil / plague will not come near thy tent. (*Verse 10*)

**Protection:** Yahweh will protect those living in Him from both evil and the sickness of plague.

### **Those living IN The Most High are protected**

3. Because His angels He will command to thee / to guard thee in all thy ways // On their hands, they will lift up thee / lest thou will strike on a stone thy foot. (*Verses 11-12*)

**Protection:** People living in The Most High are now promised that He will send His angels to protect them in two ways. We have already seen how as The Father of Jesus, The Most High, sent angels to minister to His Son as a man during great trial and testing. All living in God Most High will be guarded in their ways and borne over anything that makes them stumble by angels He sends them.

### **Those living IN The Most High are protected**

**Conclusion:** John prepared the way for The Savior Messiah by preaching and practicing baptism of repentance to forgiveness of sins. Jesus Himself was baptized by John and received The Holy Spirit before being tested. Then He preached Good News of God with commands to repent and believe. After this He called four fishermen to follow Him to be changed and they obeyed Him. By their obedience to live in God's presence, they opened themselves to receive the promise of God in a Psalm.

### **God's Son is The King who calls followers to Himself**