



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Mark - Lesson 1A

Chapter 1:1-4

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- Tonight, we begin our study through the Gospel of Mark.
 - This study will present us with a full picture of Jesus' deity, humanity, and ministry.
 - I mention this because our founding Principal teacher has completed all of the Gospels with the exception of this book we are diving into, tonight.
 - So it is my prayer that you will join us weekly as we discover a full scope of Jesus' life in harmony with the other Gospel accounts.
 - With that being said, pick me up in Chapter 1 of Mark as we read verses 1-4. Here's what the text reads:

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

Mark 1:2 just as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "Behold, I am sending My messenger before You, Who will prepare Your way;

Mark 1:3 The voice of one calling out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'"

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

- Let's Pray.
- If you have ever witnessed or listened to the beauty of a symphony, it is a harmonious complexity of varying symphonic compositions from various instruments.
 - All of this is brought together to provide what Webster's dictionary records as a symphony of flavors.
 - Different instruments with varied musical tones, keys, and notes, all accomplishing the same task, a beautiful sound.
 - Each instrument and their unique sounds are woven together in this beautiful tapestry that is put together by the conductor.
 - In a similar way, we find within the scriptures, all 4 gospel accounts penned by different writers in their own unique voices, personalities, and settings.
 - While at different times within human history, all 4 gospels have been superseded and instigated by God, the Divine author.
 - Through the Holy Spirit's supervision and leading, all 4 gospel accounts speak to, and about, a single person and His work.
 - The Father in His Divine authorship leaves no detail left out as it pertains to His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - The conductor, God the Father has made known through all 4 gospel accounts who Jesus Christ is, the authority and power of His work, and His Deity.
 - Again, today, begins our start through the Gospel of Mark.
 - As a ministry, VBVM has gone through three of the four Gospels in the past, and we encourage everyone to check out those teachings on our app.
 - We will approach this last Gospel account as we have done so in the past with the others and that is to analyze the claims and see Christ in all of His beauty, grace, and truth.

- We will dive deep into the Gospel of Mark as the Holy Spirit illuminates our hearts and minds and teaches us even more of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - Within this study we will not only see the demonstration of Jesus’ work and power.
 - But we will witness Jesus as our suffering King!
- We will see God’s redemptive and salvific plan unfold and be fulfilled through His Son, Jesus.
 - We will witness as one, scholar has documented:

“Mark’s gospel is a book on discipleship with an emphasis on servant leadership”

- However, before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let us first do some background into our study through the Gospel of Mark.
 - So with that being said, let’s begin with the introduction of this book beginning with its author.
 - The author of this Gospel account can literally be found within the title of the book.
 - John Mark is the proper name of the author of this Gospel.
 - We can see Mark’s presence in ministry work as he joins Paul and Barnabas early on in their missionary journey.
 - There came a point, however, within their time together that a “sharp disagreement” arose regarding Mark’s participation in revisiting previous cities.
 - We see evidence of this disagreement in Acts 15:37-39, check out the text with me. This is what it reads:

Acts 15:37 Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also.

Acts 15:38 But Paul was of the opinion that they should not take along with them this man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

Acts 15:39 Now it turned into such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.

- Later down the line the Apostle Paul and John Mark would eventually reconcile the issues of their previous parted past and would come back together as ministry partners.
 - This request to connect with Mark in ministry work came about through Paul’s request to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:11, where Paul writes from a prison cell in Rome.
 - What I find most profound, but not by chance, is that the very place that Paul writes from a prison cell is the very city that Mark is writing to.

- Mark writes the first Gospel account in and around AD 65.
 - This date might not be significant to many, but it plays a vital role in our understanding of setting and time in history.
- July 18, 64AD, Rome experienced what was known as “The Great Fire of Rome”.
 - During this time in Rome’s history Nero was emperor.
 - It is said that AD 64 is the year that changed for Nero’s rule in the land especially his actions towards Christians.
- According to some of the earliest surviving detailed accounts provided by Roman historian, Tacitus, it is said that the fire began at the shops at Circus Maximus, the chariot racing stadium. (Slide 1A)
 - The damage that this fire brought upon the city of Rome was said to be so catastrophic that 80 percent of the city was destroyed.
 - You might be asking, what could have been the cause of the destruction of 80 percent of Rome?
 - It is said by many scholars that Nero was the cause of this fire being set in order to rebuild the city to his liking.
 - Check out what Tacitus wrote in the Annals XV. (Slide 2A)

“A disaster followed, whether accidental or treacherously contrived by the emperor, is uncertain, as authors have given both accounts, worse however, and more dreadful than any which have ever happened to this city by the violence of fire.”

- If word was to get out that Nero started the fire it would have caused much of an uproar and a complete political disaster for his reign.
 - He could not let that happen, so what better way to protect himself than to find a scape goat and what better group to blame than Christians.
 - As you could imagine, word from the Emperor that the Christians caused such devastation to Rome spread like wildfire – no pun intended.
 - This eventually led to Nero sending the military to round up and collect all Christians in the city.
 - It is said that once the Christians in Rome were arrested, Nero had them clothed in animal hide.
 - If that was not humiliating enough, Nero would place Christians in public areas for all to see as vicious dogs were let loose to eat what they thought were animals, who were human beings dressed as animals.
 - Other Christians were crucified, fed to the lions during gladiator matches, and their bodies used as tiki torches to light the way for Nero’s Garden parties.
 - So, for a moment, friends, just imagine the conditions and times in which these Roman Christians are reading this Gospel account.
 - They are hiding for their lives, seeking refuge from the gruesome deeds of the emperor while all the while seeking to lift the name of Christ.
 - They could most definitely identify with Christ as it related to being

persecuted in public for a crime you did not commit.

- It is in Mark's Gospel, that these persecuted Roman believers can be encouraged as they read about their crucified savior.
 - It will be in this Gospel account that they will see the need for Christ having to suffer for the sake of the saints.
 - It will be through this Gospel account, that these persecuted Christians will have the wherewithal to stand firmly on what they believe amid suffering.
 - Why can they do this? Why do they still gather in worship and read scripture about their savior?
 - Because they have read that their Savior did not relent in His suffering.
 - So why should they?
- One could imagine the loneliness and helplessness that these Roman believers were facing during this time.
 - What would seem like a short period of silence, presented a "witness document" of hope!
- This Gospel, being the first one recorded, carries much significance in many ways, but one way was the Apostle that this witness account is based on.
 - Because this Gospel is not written by an Apostle, one could wonder how it gains canonicity or approval to be accepted as scripture.
 - The answer to that can be found through several of the early church fathers in the first half of the second century.
 - Papias, Eusebius, and Irenaeus provide consistent testimony concerning the work of the Gospel of Mark with Peter's unanimous approval being that Mark was Peter's secretary.
 - And these accounts are personal testament accounts from Peter himself.
- As we walk through this Gospel account together you will notice that this Gospel account is different from that of Matthew and Luke.
 - For instance, Matthew's account begins with a genealogical account of Jesus as the son of David, the son of Abraham.
 - It could be evident to a reader in that day and some Bible students today that the Gospel of Matthew is written to a primarily Jewish audience.
 - Luke's account speaks to the Gentile Christian.
 - Luke's primary aim is to relate to the reader that this promised Messiah is not just Messiah for the Jews, but also for the Gentile.
 - Luke's Gospel is also unique in that it traces the genealogy of Jesus before Abraham and goes to Adam.
 - In short it demonstrates that Jesus is in fact the second Adam, the perfect human, the promised One.
 - Mark's account, however, begins differently. His account is not focused on Jewish lineage or customs.
 - R.C. Sproul expresses in his commentary of Mark, that Mark's Gospel:

“might be called a “witness document,” something like a tract that someone would hand out to give a summary of the significant work of Jesus.”

- As we journey through this short Gospel account together, one distinct difference in Mark’s gospel is his use of the word, “immediately”.
 - This word will appear 42 times within Mark.
 - The use of this word demonstrates Mark’s urgency in showing what he deems as the major facts that point to Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.
 - As we read through Mark, you will sense this cadence of rapid fire almost as if this account were cliff notes of all 3 synoptic gospels.
- My prayer is that as we go through this gospel account, verse-by-verse, that we will see Mark’s focus on the very person of Jesus both in his humanity and deity.
 - Mark is going to draw us into knowing what it means to truly be a disciple of Christ by ultimately looking at the originator and greatest disciple maker.
 - The claims that we will see will demand a verdict. That verdict will point us to the reality that Jesus is who He claimed to be, The Messiah.
 - With this background and context in mind, pick me up at verse one of Mark Chapter 1.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

- This Gospel begins with a thematic statement and begins unlike the other gospels.
 - Mark opens up this Gospel account with a new literary style of that day, regarding New testament writings – beginning with a grand announcement.
 - This very announcement that Mark starts with will set the tone for the rest of his gospel.
 - He starts his account by saying: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”
 - You may notice that the very first two words of this book might seem a bit familiar.
 - He uses the words “The beginning”. The word beginning here in the text is the Greek word *arche*.
 - It simply means the origins or the start to something.
 - In fact, when you go back to the Old Testament starting in the book of beginnings, Genesis, the very first words of that book are “In the beginning”.
 - Similarly, John begins his gospel account in a similar way, “In the beginning”.
 - There is no surprise here then that Mark would use this statement of origin in attesting to who this gospel and its message is truly about.
 - Within the synoptic accounts, Matthew begins his account with a genealogical record of Jesus’ birth.
 - Luke begins his account with the birth of John the Baptist.
 - However, Mark begins his account much differently, in a way.

- The question may arise, why does Mark feel the need to begin with Jesus right off the bat.
- The answer lies in who Mark is writing to. When we consider our background knowledge from earlier, we know that Mark is talking to a predominantly Roman audience.
 - Mark's focus is not to appeal to the Roman Gentiles through means of Jewish ancestry or customs.
 - But rather to appeal to why Jesus must be the starting point of this introduction.
- This topic sentence, here in verse 1, is filled with the headline news of one man.
 - This start of Jesus being the focal point all centers on the fact that Jesus' very announcement is "good news"
- This word "gospel" in the Greek is *euangelion* which, transliterated, simply means "good news".
 - In both the Old Testament and New Testament, within Greek literature, the term *euangelion* was commonly used of victory from the battlefield.
 - This report of victory was always sent by a messenger proclaiming such victory to the people.
- Good news was always preceded by someone from the battlefield who would make their way to the city ahead of the king in order to announce the news.
 - The messenger would grab the attention of the people by saying such phrases as "Hear ye, Hear ye"
 - This is what Graham Stanton said regarding the word *euangelion* in a lecture he gave:

"In the Greco-Roman world the word euangelion always appears in the plural, meaning one good tidings among others, but in the New Testament, euangelion appears only in the singular: The good news of God in Jesus Christ, beside which there is no other news."

- This idea of good news or good tidings was not a New Testament concept, as a matter of fact, good news has always been biblically connected to God's redemptive plan regarding Messiah's coming and rule.
 - Isaiah the prophet speaks to this "good news" regarding God's final saving act of peace, good news, and release from oppression for God's people.
 - Check out what the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 52:7:

**Isaiah 52:7 How delightful on the mountains
Are the feet of one who brings good news,
Who announces peace
And brings good news of happiness,
Who announces salvation,
And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**

- Mark makes a clear point at the beginning of his account and that is, the gospel, more specifically, the person and work of Jesus is where it all begins.
 - The very life of Jesus speaks to the fulfilment of God’s rule, reign, and redemptive plan in human history, fully realized all in a person.
 - This good news was not wrapped up in a political overhaul or economic takeover.
 - This good news is wrapped up in a person, and His name is Jesus Christ.
 - To some a question could arise, what is the big deal regarding Jesus Christ and what victory is there in Him.
 - Briefly, but not full unpacked is a very succinct reality found in the person of Jesus and Paul mentions why Jesus in His person and work is good news in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
 - Here’s what Paul states:

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I make known to you, brothers and sisters, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, **1 Corinthians 15:2** by which you also are saved, if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **1 Corinthians 15:4** and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

- Jesus Christ is the vicarious substitute who takes our place and in exchange for His righteousness takes on our filthiness so that we may be in right standing with God.
 - We will discuss this reality more in detail in a later session.
 - Let’s now dig into the very name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus and these two specific titles, Christ and Son of God.
- Jesus’ name is Hebrew and is a variation of the name Yehoshua which transliterated means “Joshua”
 - The name Joshua means “God is salvation”
 - People tend to think that the name Christ is Jesus’ last name, however that is far from the truth and I would like to bring insight into this particular title.
 - The word Christ is a Messianic title whereas the title, Son of God is his Divine position.
 - Some of you may be familiar with this title as it is most noted as the Caesarea Philippi confession by Peter from Matthew 16.
 - Peter’s confession is prompted by a question that Jesus asks His disciples, and that question was “Who do men say that I am?”
 - Jesus’ disciples proceed by saying “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
 - It is then where Jesus asks the pointed question that ultimately revealed His role, title, and purpose.

- Peter, by the power of the Holy Spirit says out loud “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”
 - It is at this appointed moment that the Father reveals to Peter the truth of who Jesus is regarding His Messianic title and Divine position.
- But what I don’t want us to miss what Jesus says to Peter after his confession. Check out verse 17 of Chapter 16.

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

- I mention Peter’s confession, because it ultimately gives light to the reality of men and women coming to the truth of who Jesus is.
 - No one can come to the realization of who Christ is unless it is given to them to see and know by the will of the Father.
 - This could potentially be a reason as to why Mark begins his account in this manner.
 - To assume that a relationship with Jesus is based upon our familial following of Him versus being called out by Him are polar opposites.
 - Being that Mark’s gospel account is provided by the personal eye witness account of Peter, it is clear that Mark’s focus to his audience is knowing the proper person of Jesus.
 - Jesus is not merely a good teacher.
 - Jesus is much more than a prophet.
 - Jesus is God who has descended, wrapped Himself in human flesh to reveal the Kingdom of God by showing us the way through and by His Life.
 - With Jesus Christ as being the beginning of this good news, the question comes into play, who is the one that ushers in this Messianic King?
 - As with any great announcement, especially of this caliber, it would beg the need of someone to herald this news and prepare the way for victory in the person of Jesus, to come onto the scene.
 - With all things within God’s salvific plan, there is no detail that is left out or unaddressed.
 - Let’s keep moving on. Check out verse 2 through 4.

Mark 1:2 just as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “Behold, I am sending My messenger before You, Who will prepare Your way;

Mark 1:3 The voice of one calling out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!’”

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

- Verse 2 begins with the words, “As it is written in the prophet Isaiah”.

- Mark moves the reader to what is said to be Old Testament scripture written by Isaiah the prophet.
 - This Old Testament prophecy would focus on the way in which Messiah would enter His ministry as a means to prepare the Kingdom.
- As mentioned previously, Mark is not prone to using many Old Testament scriptures or references due to his audience.
 - However, what is interesting in his use of it here is to prove a very clear point from the previous verse.
 - The point being that a Messiah being mentioned to come into the world to save his people was not a new message or idea.
 - If anything, Mark further reassures his readers as to why the first verse is so declarative, this promised Messiah of old is Jesus Christ.
- Mark’s word usage for his audience is nothing short of brilliant.
 - Like any good writer or communicator who wants to communicate important details to a particular audience, you want to write in a way that connects to your audience.
 - For instance, if I am trying to clearly communicate to a six-year-old a very complex topic.
 - The aim is to use vernacular that properly articulates the point without compromising the content.
- In the same way, Mark’s use of the phrase “As it is written” in the beginning of verse 2 as an authoritative formula that was well known to his audience.
 - The phrase Mark uses at the beginning of verse 2 is the Greek word *kathōs gegraptai*.
 - This word was often used in introductions to laws or deploying legal force to its hearers.
 - In other words, this word carried authoritative weight which was announced by a messenger.
 - So, what was Mark doing here?
- Mark gives reference to Isaiah’s prophecy to give authoritative weight to the message that the messenger would come to carry.
 - That message is the reality that there will be a Messiah who will come to save His people.
 - And the role of the messenger will be to prepare His way.
- But before we move too quickly, it would be wise for us to spend a bit of time in verses 2 and 3 to understand and examine the prophecy more closely.
 - If you were familiar with Isaiah’s prophecies, you would come to the realization that what Mark records as Isaiah’s words are not fully his.
- What we see in verses 2-3 is that Mark is using 3 Old Testament scriptures as a combined quotation.
 - Mark uses Exodus 23, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3.
- It was not uncommon for New Testament writers to combine scripture together to

emphasize their point.

- If you have ever taken graduate courses at the university and have been blessed to write a thesis of some sort, you are required to prove your position.
 - You are graded on your position by providing accurate primary, secondary, and at times, tertiary resources.
 - In a similar way, Mark uses the authoritative weight of these Old Testament prophets to make the point that a messenger would come before Messiah appears onto the public stage.
- To see this tapestry of the text a bit closely, I want to show a graphic.
 - Here is how the text is broken down according to Mark's use of these combined texts. [Slide 3A]
 - A question that arises from this text is why does Mark place such heavy emphasis on this messenger or herald for the Messiah?
 - Why does it carry such prophetic weight?
 - The reason being is that this prophecy was the very last thing that the Jewish people were told regarding how Messiah would come.
 - After the book of Malachi was written there would be over 400 years of silence.
 - This period known as the intertestamental period, as you can imagine looked bleak for many Jewish men and women regarding this hope.
 - Imagine not having heard a single word prophetically uttered from the mouth of God's prophets.
 - So, the fact that in verse 4, John the Baptist arrives on the scene preaching and baptizing, one could image that his presence stirred national interest.
 - It stirred national interest because the Jewish people had a different messenger in mind.
 - The messenger they had in mind looked like the Old Testament prophet, Elijah in his garments and his diet, ie. Being clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, according to Mark 1:6.
 - However, the name of the messenger was not what Malachi mentioned which was documented as the last prophetic utterance of God's prophet before the 400 years of silence.
 - According to the prophet Malachi in Malachi 4:5, the scripture reads that Elijah the Prophet would return.
 - Check out what the text reads:

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

- So, Malachi mentions that this messenger, Elijah the prophet, would return before the Great and Terrible day of the Lord
 - It also mentions that with Elijah returning, he would turn the hearts of the children to their fathers.

- However, to understand when Elijah would physically return to the earth, we must first know what the phrase “The great and terrible day of the Lord” refers to.
 - This phrase is in reference to the seven years of tribulation.
 - Which means that prior to the start of the tribulation, Elijah will return to earth for the purpose of restoring the hearts of Israel.
 - In other words, Israel will be brought back to true obedience to the word of God – more specifically their Law, nationally.
- So it becomes clear to see why the Jewish men and women of that day were experiencing a sort of cognitive dissonance between Elijah and John the Baptist.
 - John the Baptist confessed that his ministry was not a fulfillment of Malachi 4 which is recorded in John’s Gospel, more specifically John 1:19-23.
 - As a side note, we will explore these verses in next week’s teaching in more detail, but for the sake of clarity tonight, here is what the text reads:

John 1:19 This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”

John 1:20 And he confessed and did not deny; and this is what he confessed: “I am not the Christ.”

John 1:21 And so they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he *said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”

John 1:22 Then they said to him, “Who are you? Tell us, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

John 1:23 He said, “I am the voice of one calling out in the wilderness, ‘Make the way of the Lord straight,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

- John makes it evidently clear that his ministry and mission is the fulfillment of Isaiah 40 as we reviewed earlier tonight.
 - This fulfillment of prophecy speaks specifically to that of the Messiah’s first coming.
 - It was the Jewish teaching of that day that emphasized Elijah’s return before Messiah arrives on the scene.
 - Herein lies the cause of all the confusion and speculation in one sense.
 - The Jewish people had overlooked Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 40 which foretold an unnamed forerunner who would come before Messiah.
 - This misunderstanding and overlooking of scripture could explain why at the Jewish Passover Seder an empty chair remains at the table.
 - The empty chair is prepared for Elijah the Prophet prompting the assumption that Messiah has yet come.
 - This confusion led folks to question the legitimacy of Jesus as Messiah as well as John the Baptist as a messenger, himself.
 - If we were to be honest for a moment, the concerns of these men were not any different than how you or I would have responded back then.
 - Most importantly, John wanted to make sure that he got it right and so would

you and I.

- What was anticipated by many, including John, was that this Messiah, in His coming, would come bringing justice, peace, freedom, and judgement in hand.
 - However, before judgement can come, opportunity is given to turn.
 - In other words, arguably, repercussion does not precede opportunities of steadfast patience leading to repentance.
- John and others could not wrap their minds around the reason why Jesus was showing mercy to the sinner rather than immediate judgement.
 - Once again, another misinterpretation of what the text was saying regarding John's message and mission in Isaiah 40:4-5 where Isaiah says:

Isaiah 40:4 Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the uneven ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;

Isaiah 40:5 Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together;

- ○ I believe this is the beauty of understanding the steadfast love of God. God's love is merciful and patient.
 - Peter says it best in 2 Peter 3:9:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

- God, through His Son, Jesus Christ will come face to face with men and women and through His life, death, burial, and resurrection, and ascension, will turn dead hearts to life by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - And all of this will be accomplished by Jesus showing humanity through His life what it looks like to truly be human.
 - What a grace that is to know that the Father would allow His Son to endure the pain of the cross so that we may endure the joys of sonship!
 - That's love!
- So like any great writer, God the Father provides redemptive clarity through Jesus, explaining to the crowd in Matthew 11, who John is and why His message is true.
 - Jesus mentions in Matthew 11:14 a clarifying statement that again draws to how men receive the truth of God's message.
 - Here is what Matthew 11:14 says:

Matthew 11:14 And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.

Matthew 11:15 The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.

- ○ Jesus explains in Matthew 11 that John the Baptist was in fact a type of Elijah.
 - To put it plainly, the one who was willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah was also willing to accept John as their Elijah.
- The reality of accepting this message is solely based upon the Father revealing this truth by His Spirit to those in whom He has called.
 - And those in whom the Lord calls received that message by responding to John's message and baptism unto repentance.
- The role that John the Baptist would play as the herald for the Messiah would require a preparation of hearts to receive Israel's Messiah.
 - Whenever a royal dignitary or delegate is coming to town, the security intel is there a day or so ahead of the dignitary.
 - They arrive early in order to make sure that all accommodations and things are in order for the arrival of that leader.
- In this same way, John the Baptist, preaching a baptism of repentance is to prepare the hearts of the people for their King.
 - Again, be here at next week's teaching to understand this baptism and message a bit more.
 - Before we wrap up on our teaching tonight on Mark, I would like to revisit a very important piece of Isaiah's prophecy regarding the wilderness.
- If you have been a student of scripture for some time, the wilderness should be a familiar setting for you.
 - The wilderness was typically the meeting place between God and His prophets.
 - For instance, Moses saw the burning bush in the Midianite wilderness.
 - God called a nation to Himself after He delivered them from Egypt.
 - Even Elijah was ministered to by ravens in the wilderness.
 - But what else bears the significance of the wilderness as a setting?
 - The wilderness is where God preserved His people for 40 years.
 - It is in the wilderness where God provided food for His people.
 - And the children of Israel saw the mighty provision of God time and time again in the wilderness.
 - Throughout scripture, the wilderness is a place where the people of God encountered Yahweh, mightily.
 - So it is not by chance that after 400 years of silence, that God would choose to introduce His Son on the scene in a place of familiarity.
 - Isn't it interesting that our Great God and King meets us in the most unlikely places?
 - For some they would expect the Messiah to make Himself known in the courts, however, God sees fit to meet in an unlikely place.
 - This Messianic Kingdom that was to come would arrive in a way people least expected it.
 - The Kingdom that would come would defy the odds of what was expected of many people.

- The Messiah who many expected to be ushered in with pomp and circumstances in the courts would be announced in the far corners of the wilderness.
 - The Messiah who would be expected to reign down justice and righteousness would be introduced by an unfamiliar character.
 - But most importantly, the Messiah that was to reign in victory would have to be tried, mocked, and crucified to “Fulfill all righteousness” according to the will of the Father.
- We will dive more into the messenger, the messenger’s mission, and the Messiah next week. Let’s pray.