

Sunday, January 30, 2011—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 1:4-11: What was John Preaching?

Introduction

- Last week we started studying the text of Mark’s gospel.
- In doing so we studied who John the Baptist was. This morning we want to focus on what John was preaching. What was John’s core message?
- In order to do this I would like to temporally skip verse 4 and then move quickly through verse 5 to 8 so that we can finish getting the biographical information on John. Once we have finished that we will come back to verse 4 and use it in conjunction with verses 9-11 to discuss the content of John’s message.

Mark 1:5

- ***“And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”***
- Matthew 3:5—people needed to make the conscious choice to go out and see John. This was not a message of connivance.
- We discussed last Sunday how God was using John’s ministry to draw a line in the sand within Israel. Through John’s ministry, God was in the process of distinguishing believing Israel from apostate or unbelieving Israel. The Message and ministry of John was drawing a line in the sand in Israel and determining the “little flock” of true believers from the rest of the apostate nation.
- ***“baptized of him in the river of Jordan”***—John’s baptism was clearly a water ceremony.
 - Mark 1:8
 - Matthew 3:11
- ***“confessing their sins.”***—according to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word translated confessing means to profess or acknowledge openly. *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* offers the following definition for confessing: “Owning; avowing; declaring to be true or real; granting or admitting by assent; receiving disclosure of sins, or the state of the conscience of another.”
- In other words these people were openly acknowledging that they were sinners. This is why John blasts the Pharisees and Sadducees for coming to his baptism.

Mark 1:6

- ***“And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;”***
- John’s physical description coupled with his geographical location might have been a problem for some people.
- Even John’s physical description connects him with Elijah.
 - II Kings 1:8

Mark 1:7

- ***“And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.”***
- The preaching of John was in line with his fundamental ministry to prepare the way and “make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).”
- Therefore, John’s message and ministry was not to draw attention to himself but to point out who their messiah would be.
 - Matthew 3:11
 - John 1:27

Mark 1:8

- ***“I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”***
- Once again John is clearly baptizing with water. Most of the time, when people hear the word “baptism” they automatically assume water. However, there are many different types of baptisms discussed in Scripture.
- The one coming after John in verse 7 shall (future tense) baptize you with the Holy Ghost. There are two separate baptisms in this one verse.
 - John 14:26, 15:26, 16:17
- Matthew 3:11-12—adds a third, the baptize of fire of judgment.

Mark 1:4

- ***“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”***
- Now that we have clearly seen the nature of John’s baptism with water we are better prepared to understand the content of his message.
- Many modern Christians believe and teach that baptism is an outward sign of an inward commitment. The problem is that there is not one verse of Scripture that teaches that.
- Other might say we need to follow the Lord in believer’s baptism. For Israel living during the time of John, Jesus Christ, and the 12 Apostles baptism was not a mere suggestion or recommendation.
- John was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. According to this message if Israel wanted their sins remitted what did they need to do? Submit to John’s water ceremony.
- Luke 7:28-30—these verses are not teaching baptism as an outward sign of an inward commitment. Rather they are clearly teaching baptism with water as a requirement for salvation.
- Notice in Luke 7:31 that Jesus tells his hearers that then living generation within Israel has a major problem.
 - Matthew 3:7
- Mark 16:16—the issue was not simply getting wet.
- Acts 2:40—Peter warns his hearers on Pentecost that they needed to “save themselves from this untoward generation.” How would they do this? Acts 2:38, by repenting and be baptized for the remission of sins. The message had not changed from John to Pentecost.
- John’s Baptism was drawing a line in the sand within Israel in order to separate the believers from the untoward generation or apostle nation that was living in rebellion against God.
- Matthew 3:2—this was all being done because the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Mark 1:9-11

- *“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10) And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: 11) And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*
- Matthew 3:13-17—Jesus Christ was baptized so that he could fulfill all righteousness. After Jesus Christ is washed with water the Spirit of God descends upon him.
- Exodus 29:1-4—in order to function in the office of a priest the law required that the priest be washed with water and anointed with oil. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. We know from the book of Hebrews that Jesus Christ is a high priest.
- Jesus Christ was baptized with water to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law for those who would function in the office of a priest.
- All of this helps to explain why water baptism is required for salvation in the preaching of John, Jesus, and the 12 Apostles.
- Exodus 19:6—the entire nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priest and holy nation.
- Isaiah 61:5-6
- I Peter 2:9—John, Jesus Christ, and the 12 were forming the believing remnant that will function as the kingdom of priests once the Kingdom of God is established. Which by the way John was proclaiming was at hand.
- Luke 12:32—This believing remnant is called the Little Flock

Pauline Contrasts

- I Corinthians 1:17—Paul was functioning under a different commission that did not include water baptism.
- Paul’s commission and message do include a baptism; however, it has nothing to do with water.
- I Corinthians 12:12-13—our baptism today is a spiritual baptism into the Church the Body of Christ by God the Holy Spirit.
- Colossians 2:11-12—our baptism today is not made with hands rather it is spiritual process performed by God the Holy Spirit the moment we trust Christ and believe the gospel we are identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.
- Ephesians 4:4-6—how many baptisms do you have?

- Never at any time in the outworking of God's plan was baptism an outward sign of an inward commitment.
- Simply stated water baptism is Jewish practice that the Body of Christ is not instructed to be following during the current Dispensation of Grace.