

Tempted of Satan and with Wild Beasts

Mark 1:1 – 15

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~ *Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God* is fully prepared to move with break-neck speed through this second Gospel account revealed in Scripture. John Mark himself will personally be ushering us along. As we saw in our last report, this first chapter of this book of the Bible is one that is full of action. There are very few prophetic quotations found in this Gospel record because Mark is writing to the Romans; and they probably didn't know ANY of the Old Testament Scriptures - so, that's not what they were concerned with. Their only question for Mark is: can the Lord Jesus deliver on His promises? If you have not read our last safari report, which is the first report from the Gospel of Mark, then I highly suggest you go back and do so now.

We find three beginnings in the Bible. The first great beginning is not in Genesis – it is in John chapter one at verse one. That takes us back to a dateless beginning; a beginning before chronological time began moving forward. It is simply a logistical account of occurrences; because the human mind must have some reference point to initiate an advance. When we see an airplane up in the sky, for example, we know it came from an airport somewhere - and such is the way we think. When we came into the universe and looked around, we discovered that we think the universe logically has to have a point that it took off. That would mean we need to think about a God. I don't know where God is or how God is – I only know He's there; and I know that through undeniable and irrefutable evidence, by the way. So, regarding eternity, I do not know how to comprehend that, either, and neither does anyone else; so, Christ makes a point in time to meet us and to begin with us in a physical, tangible, material and written way. One that appeals to the touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing - and opens the truth of an incomprehensible, indescribable, indiscernible and unseen reality to our minds. That's really one of the wonders of the Bible, friends...

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

~ The second beginning was in Genesis; and that's when time began to move in the physical realm of the universe and on earth. Again, I do not know when; and I don't think any credible person believes they know, will know, or ever have known. Attempts to date the universe go back centuries, of course; but the science books have changed from teaching ten thousand years in the nineteen fifties to hundreds of billions of years currently. They're still not even close - but at least they are moving in the right direction. Once we comprehend Pluto and Mars, we'll likely triple the number again. The reality is the universe is older than that; and we can know because even hundreds of billions multiplied by hundreds of trillions to the seventy-seventh power does not equal eternity, my dear readers. We simply do not understand this universe at all or what is ahead of us for our souls - and we do not comprehend a non-chronological existence - but we will! When we get into His presence, and we know even as we are known, we are going to marvel at our stupidity, naivety and abhorrently ignorant gullibility. Even worse, we'll be ashamed how little time we really took to become acquainted with and know about God! What is called wisdom in the world today is pure foolishness to the Lord! The wisdom of God seems foolishness to man - because man does not have any natural thought patterns of God to fit ideas and problems into.

The third beginning is here in Mark - and it is the beginning of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. John, in his first epistle, said, "... that which was from the beginning." That's what we're talking about here: the beginning of the Gospel; the beginning of the teachings of Jesus. We don't stop with these teachings or with miracles and say they are the Gospel. We just saw in Exodus the teachings of Christ are NOT the Gospel. This is the beginning of the Gospel going out to the world. I think John Mark and Paul were good friends at this time and Mark had likely read Romans. Mark takes the facts for the Gospel from Peter, but his interpretation definitely comes from Paul. Well, Mark is just going to give us facts....

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 John came baptizing in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.

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.

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;

~ I made a change to verse four that needs to be made. John did not baptize FOR the remission of sins; it was UNTO the remission of sins that John the Baptist baptized. It is a minor translational distinguishment that doesn't change or even affect the doctrine - but, rather, is more specific in Christ's intent. John's ministry prepared people for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. This is very, very important for us to see correctly. Further, John the Baptist was a Levite, so he was of the order of the priests. John was remarkable in dress, diet, appearance and speech, obviously. John should have probably been ministering in the temple in Jerusalem; but, somehow, I don't think the majority welcomed him there. In fact, I know they didn't.

Well, God has called John as a prophet; and some people went out to him in the wilderness. Most people want to put a church where it is readily accessible or near other places where people congregate on a social basis; but John didn't operate by that theory. John sang a solo; he didn't even have a band. John was a strange and strong man who was truly humble and genuinely meek. John was way out there beyond the third ridge in the wilderness, but multitudes still went to him because they were stirred by his teaching. Their hearts were convicted by the message....

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.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

~ The real baptism that is meaningful in our lives is the baptizing of the Holy Spirit. Ritual baptism, by water, is important as part of your outward witness and testimony as it identifies you with the resurrected Christ and the family of God; but it's not a part of salvation like the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The only reason Jesus was baptized was to identify Himself with mankind. Well, we know Jesus is here because verse nine says, "... Jesus came from..." and here we are now as we have come with Him in His Word after thirty years of quiet training in Nazareth. Jesus came to identify Himself with this human family. John didn't want to baptize Jesus, as you know; Jesus said, "suffer it so now." Now, in verses ten and eleven, we have the Trinity brought together in a very definite way. We have the Spirit, the Father and Jesus here all in One place. The Trinity is brought to our attention in the form of the Heavenly seal of the Person and dedication of the Lord Jesus Christ...

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.

~ The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three Persons of the Godhead - the Trinity - but only one God. The Trinity is an enigmatic mystery that is almost impossible to explain. The word "Trinity" isn't in the Bible but the Bible teaches the Trinity. Explanation of the Trinity is not conducive to this "instant" age, though. It cannot be explained in just a few moments. Like Holy Writ itself, it must be thoroughly studied from many various angles in all of the differing sections of the Bible. For example, God said, at the Tower of Babel, "let "us" go down...." - but it also says "the Lord" scattered them at Babel! We have only One God; not three - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All have the exact same nature. Three Persons – One God!

Let me give you a few very poor examples of how this works out in creation and how God existing in the three Persons of the Godhead is meaningful in our everyday lives: (1) the same way music is made. There are only three structural tones from which ALL music come: tonic, subdominant and dominant. That's the harmony of Heaven – it's all your ears hear - and the Bible speaks of that harmony (2) water exists in three states: steam, ice and flowing liquid. It's all water. Steam is the Holy Spirit because of the power it holds. Ice is the rigidity of the Father and Christ is the Living Water of life which quenches our thirsty souls (3) when we pass light through a prism, we observe three primary colors: red, yellow and blue. Push them back through the prism and you get one white light! Without light there would be no color; technically, everything is colorless in this world but we can comprehend color based on what can or cannot absorb light (4) Man was made in the likeness of God and in His image - and man is also a trinity: body, soul and spirit. If we understood ourselves, we could better understand the Trinity – but – we don't.

Further, this universe exists in only three dimensions: time, space and matter. Some scientists would include energy; and I would agree – but only with certain conditions and caveats – energy is not a constant. When the switch is turned off there is no energy on the off-side. So, (1) Time is broken up into only three aspects: past, present and future (2) Space consists in only three measurements: length, width and height (3) Matter can only be explained in three principles: solid, liquid, and gas. In extreme environments, three other states may be present: plasma, Bose-Einstein condensates, and neutron stars; but any way you cut it – everything is divisible by three! Of course, I realize that even my explanation here is totally and wholly inadequate, too, but it may at least help to put us on the same page concerning the Trinity.

Moreover, to be sure, the revelation of Deity in the Old Testament falls into three classes: (1) Primary (2) Compound, with "El" / God - and (3) Compound, with "Jehovah" – Lord. The English form for each of those three categories falls into three sub-categories: (1) a. God, b. LORD, c. Lord (2) a. Almighty God, b. Most High God, c. everlasting God – and (3) a. LORD God, b. Lord God, c. Lord of Hosts. The Hebrew equivalent for each of those

three English forms is: (1) a. El, Elah and Elohim, b. Jehovah, c. Adon or Adonai (2) a. El Shaddai, b. El Elyon, c. El Olam – and (3) a. Jehovah Elohim, b. Adonai Jehovah, c. Jehovah Sabaoth.

So, the Trinity is suggested by and, ultimately, revealed in three groups of threes in Holy Writ. This is not some arbitrary arrangement, friends; it inheres in the Old Testament itself. This revelation of God by His Names is invariably made in connection with some particular need of His people; and there can be no need of mankind to which these Names do not answer. Man's true and only resource is the Lord Jesus Christ – the Son of God. Even our human failure and sin but evoke new and fuller revelations of His divine fulness. The Old Testament Scriptures reveal the existence of a Supreme Being; the Creator of this universe and of mankind. God is the source of all life and of all intelligence. He is to be worshipped and served by both men and angels....

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

~ Well, we know things are moving fast when the wilderness temptation of Jesus is summed up in one passing verse; but that's how Christ comes forth as the servant of the Father. Notice that immediately the Spirit driveth Him out into the wilderness. It is a note of ferocity and serious design of His will. The question we are seeking the answer to is: will Jesus be able to do the job? We have seen a whole lot of failures documented in the Bible so far. The temptation is the initiation into His work and ministry. We don't have any of the details that Matthew or Luke gives us; only the forty-day time frame. The temptation was all day every day for all of those forty days, too. Now, these wild beasts didn't contribute to the temptation in some

mysteriously unknown way, though. This means all of creation ministered to him at the time of His temptation, the way I understand the Bible.

Remember, in Genesis, God creating the earth was done for one reason and one specific reason only: to make a home for man. I believe that's why we have a flood without a Noah in Genesis chapter one verses one through three. As far as man knows, this earth is the only habitable place with people on it! To think that, because we can see this galaxy of expansion a little bit more clearly with a man-made invention, means that there is a probability of life on other planets, is highly presumptuous, attempts to single-handedly bridge a quantum leap and borders on outrageously preposterous.

So, that said, Jesus takes off in His ministry and verse fourteen should read, ...”preaching the Gospel of God.” The word “kingdom” is not in the better manuscripts because the kingdom of Heaven is within the kingdom of God, as we have seen on safari. Well, we're going with Jesus into Galilee and preaching the Gospel as we go. The time is at hand – repent, ye self-professed believers, and believe the Gospel. Of course, faith becomes before repentance. Grace certainly must precede peace. When and if we turn to Christ, we will turn away from something of this world, my beloved. It simply cannot be otherwise. You cannot have a turning to Christ without repentance. Impossible. You may be absolutely sure that when you see someone genuinely turn to and trust Him as their Savior, you’re also going to see a life that turns away from something and a heart that changes its mind on a whole bunch of things. We are to believe in the Gospel. The Gospel transforms lives. God says so. Well, we’ll believe more as we go along in our Spiritual Safari on this busy day with the Lord Jesus Christ in our next report, I promise you that. If you're still reading these reports after the next - you are a genuine believer ~



