



Lesson Two

Mark 1:9-13: The Anointed One

Jesus' Baptism & Temptation

Read Mark 1:9-13

The Public Declaration of Divine Sonship

Picture this: You're standing at the edge of the Jordan River, watching as a carpenter from Nazareth walks into the muddy waters. In a moment, everything changes. The heavens tear open, a voice thunders from above, and the course of human history pivots on what happens next.

Here's what I find fascinating about this scene: Jesus doesn't need to prove who He is before the Father speaks. He doesn't need to perform miracles, preach sermons, or demonstrate His worthiness. **The declaration comes first, then the testing follows.**

But here's the problem many face: We may live our lives trying to earn the approval we desperately crave. We may think we have to prove ourselves worthy before anyone—including God—will declare us beloved. We perform, we strive, we exhaust ourselves **trying** to become somebody worth loving. And in our more honest moments, we wonder if we'll ever be enough.

What if I told you that God's pattern is exactly the opposite? What if approval comes before performance, not after? What if the declaration of who you are in Christ is the **foundation**, the beginning, not the finish line, not something that is earned?

Notice our text, and what Mark highlights for us—**the declaration of identity comes first, then follows the conduct that flows from that identity.** The same pattern is followed in our salvation, at the moment of repentance and faith we are declared the sons of God, our identity is fixed and declared first, **before** we do any works, or demonstrate any fidelity with our God and Savior.

In Mark 1:9-13, we witness the divine pattern that changes everything. God declares Jesus' identity as the beloved Son, then immediately that identity is tested in the wilderness. This isn't just about Jesus—it's about how **God** works in

every believer's life. Let's examine this pivotal passage and discover how God's declaration over His Son becomes the foundation for understanding our own identity in Him.

The Public Declaration of Divine Sonship

(Mark 1:9-11)

Mark's account of Jesus' baptism is both economical and **profound**. In just three verses, the evangelist presents us with a scene that reverberates through eternity:

*"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus [God the Son] came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit [God the Spirit] like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, [God the Father] saying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (vs. 9-11)*

The significance of this event cannot be overstated. **Here we witness the Trinity in perfect unity of purpose.** The Son submits to baptism, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven. This is not merely a religious ceremony; it is the divine inauguration of the Messiah's public ministry.

Notice that Jesus "*came from Nazareth of Galilee.*" Mark emphasizes Jesus' **humble** origins. Nazareth was an insignificant town—so insignificant that Nathanael would later ask, "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" Yet from this obscure place comes the One who would change the world. This detail serves as a powerful reminder

that God's ways are not our ways. Human wisdom would have expected the Messiah to emerge from Jerusalem, from the temple, from the halls of religious power. Instead, He comes from nowhere, reminding us that God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

The baptism itself presents a theological puzzle that has challenged scholars for centuries. Why would the sinless Son of God submit to a baptism of repentance? The answer lies in Jesus' own words to John the Baptist in Matthew's parallel account: "*Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*" (**Matthew 3:15**). Jesus' baptism was not an acknowledgment of personal sin but an identification with sinful humanity and a fulfillment of all righteousness on our behalf.

The heavens opening is deeply significant. Since the fall of man, heaven has been sealed from earth. The prophet Isaiah cried out, "*Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down!*" (**Isaiah 64:1**). Now, at Jesus' baptism, those heavens are torn open, never to be closed again. The way between God and man has been opened through Christ.

The Spirit's descent like a dove is equally profound. The dove recalls the dove that returned to Noah's ark with an olive leaf, signaling the end of God's judgment and the beginning of a **new** covenant. Here, the Spirit's gentle descent signals the inauguration of the new covenant in Christ's blood.

But perhaps most significant is the Father's declaration: "*Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" This statement combines language from Psalm 2:7, where God declares the Messiah to be His Son, and Isaiah 42:1, where God describes His chosen servant in whom His soul delights. **In this single statement, the Father identifies Jesus as both the divine Son and the suffering servant.** He is the King who will rule and the servant who will suffer.

The timing of this declaration is crucial. It comes not after Jesus has accomplished His mission, not after He has proven Himself through miracles or teaching, but at the very beginning of His ministry. The Father's pleasure in the Son is not based on **performance** but on His essential nature and His willingness to undertake the mission of redemption.

The Immediate Test of Divine Sonship

(Mark 1:12-13)

Mark's account of the temptation is remarkably brief compared to Matthew and Luke, but it is no less powerful:

"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." (vs. 12-13)

The word "*immediately*" is characteristic of Mark's Gospel and appears over forty times. Here it emphasizes the direct **connection** between the baptism and the temptation. The same Spirit who descended upon Jesus now drives Him into the wilderness. This is not an accident or an unfortunate

detour; it is the divine plan. The Son who has just been declared beloved must now prove His worthiness through testing.

The wilderness is significant throughout Scripture as a place of testing and preparation. Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, failing the test of faith. Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai receiving the law. Elijah spent forty days in the wilderness fleeing from Jezebel. Now Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness, succeeding where Israel failed, fulfilling what Moses prefigured, and demonstrating the faith that Elijah struggled to maintain.

Satan's temptation of Jesus is fundamentally an attack on His **identity** as the Son of God. While Mark doesn't record the specific temptations, we know from the parallel accounts that each temptation began with "*If thou be the Son of God...*" Satan's strategy is always the same: to make us doubt God's declaration about who we are and to seek fulfillment outside of God's will.

The presence of wild beasts in Mark's account is unique and significant. In the original creation, Adam lived in harmony with all creatures. **Sin shattered that harmony**, making the animal kingdom dangerous to man. But here, the Second Adam demonstrates His dominion over creation. The wild beasts pose no threat to the sinless Son of God. This detail points forward to the ultimate **restoration** of all things when "*the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb*" (***Isaiah 11:6***).

The ministry of angels to Jesus is a beautiful picture of divine care. The Father does not spare His Son from testing,

but He does not **abandon** Him in testing. Angels, who are "*ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,*" (**Hebrews 1:14**) attend to the needs of the incarnate Son. This demonstrates both Jesus' humanity—He had real physical needs—and His deity—angels worship and serve Him.

The Theological Implications for Our Faith

This passage establishes several crucial theological truths that form the foundation of our faith. First, it confirms the doctrine of the Trinity. The simultaneous presence and activity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this passage provide **one of the clearest Trinitarian passages in Scripture**. This is not three Gods but one God in three persons, **united** in purpose and glory.

Second, it establishes Jesus' unique identity as both fully God and fully man. The Father's declaration confirms His deity, while His need for angelic ministry confirms His humanity. This dual nature is essential to the gospel. **Only as man could Jesus represent us; only as God could His sacrifice be sufficient for all.**

Third, it demonstrates the necessity of testing in the life of faith. If the sinless Son of God was not exempt from temptation, we should not expect to be. But we can take comfort in knowing that our High Priest "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*" (**Hebrews 4:15**).

Finally, this passage provides the pattern for our own spiritual journey. Like Jesus, we must know who we are before we can successfully face who we are not. Our identity as children of God, declared at our conversion and sealed by the Holy Spirit, must be settled before we can withstand the attacks of the enemy on that identity.

Conclusion: Living in Light of Divine Declaration

The baptism and temptation of Jesus Christ stand as twin pillars supporting the entire structure of Christian faith. In His baptism, we see the perfect unity of the Trinity and the public declaration of Jesus' **identity** as the beloved Son. In His temptation, we see the testing and vindication of that identity through perfect obedience to the Father's will.

For the believer, this passage offers both comfort and challenge. The comfort lies in knowing that our Savior has successfully passed every test we will face. The challenge lies in following His example of unwavering trust in the Father's declaration of our identity in Him. **When Satan whispers doubts about who we are, we can respond with confidence: "I am a child of God, beloved and accepted in the Beloved."**

The question is not whether we will face testing—we will. The question is whether we will face it with the same unshakeable confidence in our **divine** identity that Jesus demonstrated in the wilderness. May this passage strengthen our faith and deepen our understanding of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.