

## **“In the Wilderness for Forty Days”; Mark 1:12-13, Part 1**

**0260**

Jesus saw the father's desire as so, impelling upon Him, so, compelling of His nature, that Mark from the perspective of Jesus, literally describes it as the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when He came up out of the water, immediately, He saw the heavens being torn open, and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove, and a voice came from heaven, you are my beloved Son with you, I am well pleased. The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness, forty days, being tempted by Satan, and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him. Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

So, the expression that Mark uses here that the Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness is really gives us the sense that Mark wants us to see the temptation of Jesus falling immediately upon the heels of the baptism of Jesus. Now, if we were studying in Mark's gospel, (I'm sorry), Luke's gospel, chapter four, we would see there that Luke tells us that that Jesus returns to Jerusalem before going into the wilderness for this temptation. But not Mark doesn't narrate it that way. Not that that's not how it happens. But instead, Mark wants to communicate to us this idea, this firm idea that Jesus immediately right upon almost coming up out of the water and hearing the words from heaven, immediately, He then goes into the wilderness for this period of temptation.

So, this, this anointing of the Spirit is the last thing that happens, the declaration from heaven, and then the temptation in the wilderness. So, this reminds us of another anointing, of an anointing of another king, in which He also immediately then goes into the field of testing, or the field of battle. Because what all this is, is this is the story of our Champion, verses 12 and 13. These are the this is the story of our great Champion of the one who fought and won the battle that we lost, fought and won the battle that we never could have won.

And so,, this anointing of the Son to go out and do this battle in our place reminds us of another anointing from First Samuel chapter 16. We spoke about this last week. First Samuel 16, David is also anointed by the Spirit. And we were looking last week at this anointing of the Spirit upon the human Jesus to empower Him, to enable Him to do the ministry that God has called him to do, that God has set him apart to do.

And so, in a similar way, David was anointed by the Spirit in First Samuel chapter 16 and verse 13. Samuel anointed him with the oil and the Spirit of the Lord rushes upon him, there's once again that sort of violent language of the supernatural, breaking into the natural so, the Spirit rushes upon David, he's filled with the Spirit, he's empowered to do the work that God has for him, which is to rule over Israel. And then right after that, the next story is—Goliath.

Take a look at your notes. And for Samuel chapter 17, and verse four, the next thing that we see is this man, Goliath of Gath steps into the scene. And so, this is immediately upon the anointing of David for his tasks for his role that God has called him to. So, if you take a close look at the Scripture references there for Samuel chapter 16, verse 13, is the anointing and the filling of the Spirit, the equipping by the Spirit, and then chapter 17, verse four—which is only a few verses later—now this man, Goliath is here.

So, there's the anointing, there's the empowering, and then there's the battle. There's Goliath. And here's David who steps out onto the battlefield to do just as Jesus was doing, which is to be the Champion of His people. His people were cowering in fear, and no one would go out and fight Goliath, and the Philistines were such scary people. And here comes David to say, what is this? We are the army of the Lord, the battle is the Lord's. And then so, David goes out, and he fights this battle, and he defeats the foe, he defeats the enemy. All of that is teaching us about the Champion who is to come, the Champion who would fight our great battle—the battle which we lost—we'll get to that in just a minute. But the battle that we could never have won, our great Champion comes to fight that battle for us. So, this all reminds us of David, who's teaching us about this. David, who was himself anointed, and then goes immediately onto the field of battle and immediately defeats the foe of the people of God.

And so, this champion has been raised up to be the champion of God's people, and he's pointing us, of course, to our great Champion Jesus, who will fight this battle for us. So, this battle, this verse 12, and verse 13, this is all about this, this climactic battle. And it's a battle that has been brewing for centuries upon centuries. Because if we all remember our Bibles, we know how the story of our Bibles unfolds.

From back in Genesis chapter one, we remember the creation in the fall. And then in Genesis chapter three, we remember those words, when God the Father pronounces the curse upon the serpent, and he curses the serpent, and then He says—I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between her seed and your seed. Or in other words, between her descendants and new. In other words, God says, I will put enmity between you and the seed of the woman, the seed of the woman, being the people of God, the holy remnant of God's people.

And so, God says, It's me who does this, I put the enmity. Enmity is just a word that just means, being in a state or condition of being enemies. I will make enemies of you, and the seed of the woman. And so, this explains perfectly for us what's happening here in the wilderness. This is the result of the enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman, who is now we know to be Christ.

This battle, though climatical, is not ultimately climate climactical, not even in the Gospel of Mark. We'll see the battle rages throughout the gospel, it'll come to a greater climax at the end of the gospel, and then there's even an even greater climax coming. But up to this point, this is the greatest battle in this enmity, this condition of being in enemies, between the serpent and the seed of the woman. And so, this explains what we see here in verses 12 and 13.

But it actually goes further than that. This explains for us everything that we see in our world. You ever look at your phone, or read the news, or, or read a newspaper, or hear about what's going on in the world around us, and say to yourself—What in the world is happening? You ever say that? What in the world is going on?

There's such foolishness and craziness and violence and murder, and rape, and war. All of that is explained, if we know our Bibles, we're not surprised by that, because Genesis three, verse 15, tells us this is what's going on. God says, This is me. I put enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman, and we who are the people of God, the seed of the woman, we are in that condition of being enemies with the serpent.

And so, this explains everything that we see in our world around us—the the great hostility, the violence, the murder, that just never seems to stop. All of this was told us in Genesis chapter 15, when God says, I will put enmity between the woman, the seed of the woman and the serpent.

And so, this is what our Champion is stepping out to do here in verses 12 and 13. These two short, briefest of verses, the Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness in order to go and to do this battle.

So, let's take a look here at verse 12. The Spirit immediately drove Him out. So, that's, of course, the same Spirit that just alighted on Him in the previous passage. The same Spirit that comes down, to anoint Him with power, to anoint Him with the Spirit, that anointing by that same Spirit, this is the same Spirit that now drives Him out into the wilderness. Or in the King James, it uses the word driveth, or drove in our English standard. Drove Him out into the wilderness.

So, now this Spirit wants Him to go into the wilderness and, actually the word here is to drive Him into the wilderness. This reminds us first of all, of another, driving into the wilderness back in Leviticus chapter 16. We talked about this again last week. But last week, as we talked about Jesus going under the waters, being submerged, immersed into the waters of the sinfulness of the people. Remember how we related that to the scapegoat of Leviticus 16. That procedure that took place on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, that day in which all the sins of the people were confessed. And the high priest, put it placed his hands on the head of the goat, confessed the sins of the people, and that that goat then symbolically or ritually you could say, bore the sin of the people.

And so, in the same way, what that's pointing us to is what Jesus does under the water. Jesus goes under the water. He's immersed in the sinfulness of the people, and just like the goat symbolically became the bearer of the sin of the people, so, now the Lamb goes under the water to point to the day on the cross where He will become in reality, the sin of the people.

But then there's yet another connection, because as the people come and they confess their sin, and then Jesus is submerged in the, into those waters of confession. So, also the priest confesses the sin of the people on the scapegoat. But after that, remember what happens is—the goat is then driven into the same place into the wilderness. Same word is used there—driven into the wilderness. So, here we have the Lamb of God, going under the waters of the confession of the people, and then being driven into the wilderness, pointing us back to Leviticus 16, where the Scapegoat—the sins of the people were confessed over the goat, and then the goat was driven also into the wilderness—so, we see that connection there. The goat, of course, is teaching us of the Lamb of God who is to come who will become the sin of the people and He, Himself be driven into the wilderness.

But let's think about this word that that Mark uses driven, or driveth in the King James, or drove Him. It's a forceful word. It's a word that speaks to us of another imposing their will on someone else. When you drive someone out, you sort of get the idea that the person being driven out, or the one, or the thing being driven out didn't want to be driven out. But the stronger one imposed their will on them.

And so,, it's the word 'ekballo.' And it's just a compound word in the Greek, the word 'ballo,' which means to throw, and 'ek,' means out—to throw out. And so, literally, what this means is to throw out, or to cast out.

It's a word that Mark uses some 17 times. And usually he's going to use it most often, to describe what Jesus does to demons—He cast them out.

And so, we see in just a few verses, and chapter one, verse 34, we're going to see this same use here—He healed many who are sick and with various diseases and cast out many demons. Or just a couple of verses later, verse 39—He went through get all throughout all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues, and casting out demons—same word there.

And the other gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, will also use the same word to describe what Jesus does to the demons, who live in people, who have possessed people, so, to speak.

So, it's a forceful word and speaks of casting one out, or throwing one out against their will. Matthew also uses the same word to also speak of throwing out in other senses. For example, when Jesus, remember the instance where He cleanses the Temple, and throws the people out, throws the money changers out? Same word there.

So, when we think about this word, describing Jesus and Jesus being sent into the wilderness, and Mark is going to use this word that is most often used in this way of casting out against one's will, then we think about this, and it becomes a little bit problematic, because it speaks to us, of perhaps, maybe Jesus not wanting to go to the wilderness, and the Spirit imposing the Spirit's will upon Jesus, to drive Jesus into the wilderness. And that becomes extremely problematic.

Because Christ, never for one instant, had a will that was opposed to the Father. Never for one moment, did the will of Jesus ever misaligned with the Father.

Even in the Garden, before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus would say the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is...weak. Not unwilling, not opposed, just weak. So, Jesus never needed to be coerced by the Father to do any of the Father's will. Jesus lived to do the Father's will.

So, we think about this, and we immediately arrive at a place in which it just does not work to think of Jesus being driven against His will into the wilderness. But here's what we see. We also see that this word is used, not the majority of times, but sometimes it's used to speak of a casting out or a sending out in a different sort of a sense. So, in chapter one, Mark 1:34 and verse 39, we saw how Mark used that word to describe what happens to the demons. Well, just a couple of verses later in verse 43, Mark uses the same word this way—and Jesus sternly charged—the context here is the man who was the leper who was just cleansed—Jesus sternly charged [the man who was just cleansed of leprosy] and sent him away, same word.

So, the word also has a different manner of casting out, or putting out because Jesus certainly did not send out the man He just cleansed from leprosy in the same manner that He sent the demons out of the people that He cleansed. That's, it's two different 'sending outs' there.

So, we put this together and here's what Mark is trying to say. Mark is not trying to say that Jesus was sent into the wilderness against His will. In fact, what Mark is saying is the opposite. What Mark is saying is that Jesus' will was so, conformed to the Father's, that when the Spirit desired Him to go into the wilderness, Jesus saw that as so, compelling, so, necessary, that to Him—remember, Mark is telling this from the perspective of Jesus—that to Jesus, it's as though the Spirit is driving Him there. It's as though He has no choice. If this is what the Father desires of me, then this is what I will do. There is no other option.

This is the sense that Mark is trying to get across to us—that Jesus saw the father's desire as so, impelling upon Him, so, compelling of His nature, that Mark—from the perspective of Jesus—literally describes it as the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. That's what Mark is saying. So, it's the opposite of this idea that Jesus, against His will, was sent into the wilderness. Instead, it's saying that Jesus' will could not have been more aligned with the Father's will.

And so,, the Spirit here, drives Him into the wilderness. Remember from John chapter five and verse 30, what Jesus says, I do nothing of my own, I seek not my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. So, this Spirit immediately notice, again, this just the pace of all this, the Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness.

So, now as He goes into the wilderness, we begin to see one of the greatest contrasts in the gospels, probably the greatest contrast in Mark's gospel, and that's the contrast between the waters of the Jordan and the wilderness.

Because the scene that we just left, so, radically, and so, abruptly, the scene that we just left was a scene of incredible peacefulness. Here are the baptismal waters, where the Son has just come up out of the waters. And here's the Spirit, the very embodiment of peace in the Dove, who comes and rests on the Son. And here's this voice from heaven, this affirming, encouraging remember last week, we talked about just the affirmation of the Father, this voice from the from the heavens that declares—You are my Son, you are loved. And you please Me.

And then Mark just wants to draw this starkest of contrast, this most abrupt of changes from the peaceful, encouraging mountaintop waters of the Jordan, to now the wilderness. So, begin to put into your mind, a picture of the wilderness. And what takes place here is probably vastly different from the depictions that you probably saw in your Sunday school books and the paintings that you may have seen. So, put out of your mind forever, this image of Jesus with curly blond hair and bright blue eyes, and lily-white skin, just sort of kneeling by the rock and just gazing up into heaven with His hands crossed and a beam of sunlight shining down on His face.

Because in the wilderness, what you now need to picture is the pit of evil. What you need to picture is the demonic, the playground of the demonic, so, to speak. Dark, hideous, evil.

This the backyard of Satan, so, to speak, is where Jesus now goes. The place, in and of itself, nearly devoid of life. The only thing that lives there are scorpions and snakes, no vegetation, very, very little water, dry, acrid, dusty. Not in any way, an inviting place at all.

And Jesus now goes into this place in which He will be stepping into the darkest of darkness. He will be stepping into the viper pit, so to speak. So, this is not a serene little scene of Jesus sitting off by Himself meditating in the wilderness. This is Jesus being subjected to the fiercest temptations that the enemy, that the prince of darkness can throw to Him.

So, as He goes into the wilderness, He's going now into this place of preparation, because the wilderness in the Scripture is a place of preparation. We saw that last week, we saw that last week was a place of preparation, the people come out to the wilderness to be prepared for Messiah. That's what John's message is—prepare for Messiah. And so, in the wilderness is where the people come to confess their sin to be prepared for Messiah to come.

Likewise, it's also a place of preparing for Jesus, because Jesus there in the wilderness—the part of the wilderness where John is and the crowds are—that is a place in which He is anointed for His work. So, it's a place of preparing for both Jesus and the people. But now Jesus is being sent to a, if you will, more desolate, more isolated, more secluded wilderness, to be further prepared for what lies ahead of Him. And throughout the gospel of Mark, the wilderness is going to be portrayed to us as a place of preparation.

Take a look with me and Mark chapter one and verse 35—rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed. So, Jesus even prepares for the day by going into a desolate place into a wilderness type of place.

So, Mark says—He was in the wilderness now for forty days. Mark does not tell us that He fasted, but Matthew and Luke both tell us that He fasted the entire forty days. So, He will be here without sustenance, without food for forty days. And of course, we immediately recognize this forty, time-frame period of forty, as something with great Spiritual significance. We know of many instances in the Scripture in which a period of forty—forty days or forty years—was a time of special preparation. We think of Moses who was with God on the mountain for forty days, or Moses who for forty years, was being prepared in the wilderness, to go into Egypt and say to Pharaoh to let my people go. Or we think of Elijah, the forty days as He was preparing to meet God on Mount Horeb. Or we think of the forty years in the wilderness as the people of God were prepared to enter into the Promised Land. Or we even think of Jesus in Acts chapter one and verse three, that for forty days, the risen Jesus was with the disciples, preparing them for His departure and the coming of the Spirit.

And so, this forty day timeframe is something that just immediately resonates with us, because we know that in the Scriptures that oftentimes there's period of forty days, and what that signifies for us is there's a preparation that's taking place. And so, Jesus is in the midst of this preparation time for forty days, in which He is fasting for this forty days, you can just imagine the weakness, the weakness of His body, the physical weakness that He would have incurred in this time period. Luke chapter seven, Jesus describes Himself, He says that, what people are saying about me is I'm a drunkard and a glutton. So, Jesus could eat, and Jesus could go to the dinner parties and everything. But at the same time, nobody fasted like Jesus.

So, for forty days, now, the human Jesus is going to be without sustenance, and He's going to be weak in body and weak in strength. And you know, what happens to your soul to your spirit when your body is tired, when your body is hurting, when your body is weak. Doesn't that also weaken your soul and weakens your spiritual strength, your spiritual resistance.

And so, this is the state that Jesus is now going to be in for this time of testing, this time of preparation that is ahead of Him.

So, the Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness, verse 13, and He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan. So, what now commences is this battle between strong men. The Bible teaches us of this battle between the strong men, and Mark is one that really wants to focus on this, this battle between strong men.

And so, the way that Mark describes it to us through the Gospel is that there's a strong man, but he's an illegitimate strongman. And he has come and he's an illegitimate king. He's an illegitimate prince, he's an illegitimate ruler. But now a stronger Man is coming in order to do battle and to defeat the strong man and cast him out, because the stronger Man is the legitimate king.

And so, Mark will carry that theme. He'll sort of carry that context throughout his gospel. Let me just kind of show us how he's going to do that. Just take a look at verse 21. This is the first miracle, in Mark's gospel. The first miracle is the healing of the man with unclean spirit. So, take a look at just how Mark sets this up for us to think of this as a battle of two strong men. The illegitimate strong man—Satan—who set up an illegitimate kingdom, but now he's coming up against the far stronger Man.

So, verse 21, day went into Compendium, and immediately on Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching and they were astonished at His teaching. He taught them as one who had authority. There you go, authority. He's the legitimate one. He's the legitimate ruler, the legitimate, strong man. His teaching had had authority, verse 23, and immediately there was in their synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit. So, here the

illegitimate strong man comes into the holy place. You see the battle here, the lesser strong man Satan if you will, who has now read his ruling in the life of this man and it's being manifested in this unclean spirit that he has, he comes into the holy place into the domain of the stronger man.

And so, he comes into the synagogue and he makes this scene, verse 24, what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are the Holy One of God. But Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be silent Come out of him." And the unclean Spirit convulsing him crying out with a loud voice came out of him. They were all amazed, and so, that they questioned among themselves, saying, what is this a new teaching with authority, He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.

Now, that sort of thing is going to follow through the whole gospel, this idea that there is a kingdom here, and that kingdom is wrong. It shouldn't be here. It's a cruel, evil taskmaster. But he is here, and he has possessed people. And he has caused sickness and death and destruction. But the real King is here, the real strong Man is here, and He's going to cast out the strong man.

Take a look at the parable that Jesus is going to tell in chapter three and verse 27. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, then indeed, he may plunder his house. So, this is what Jesus is here to do. And this is what He begins doing, in chapter one, verse 12, and 13. He begins binding the strong man. Take a look at what John says in First John three and verse eight, the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. And so, this is what Jesus begins here this work of binding the strong man.