

The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry – Mark 1:9-45

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down... Isaiah 64:1

1. Where are you longing for God to “rend the heavens and come down?” (see notes on back)

Baptism & Temptation – READ Mark 1:9-13

2. What does Jesus see and *hear* as he comes up out of the water at His baptism? How does it call to mind the plea of God’s people in the Isaiah verse above?
3. Where does the Spirit lead Jesus immediately after His baptism? For what purpose do you think? (See Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16)

Proclamation & Calling – READ 1:14-20

4. Jesus emerges from the wilderness proclaiming that “the kingdom of God is near.” What response does He call for? When did that response become a reality for you?
5. What stands out to you about how Jesus calls the first disciples? ...and how they respond? Where have your priorities and allegiances been reordered as a follower of Jesus Christ?

Healing & Deliverance – READ 1:21-28; 29-34 & 40-45

6. In what ways does Jesus demonstrate His authority in these passages? What were some of the responses? Have you ever struggled with submitting to Jesus’ authority?
7. Mark begins his Gospel by calling Jesus the “Son of God” (1:1). How is that claim supported throughout the rest of the chapter? How should this shape the way we relate to Jesus?

Communion with God in Prayer – READ 1:35-39

8. After an exhausting and successful day of ministry, where do we find Jesus early the next morning? How does that frustrate the disciples? What clarity does Jesus receive through prayer?
9. Can you think of a time when God gave you clarity in prayer that might not have made sense to the people around you?

Digging Deeper

Key Themes in Mark 1:9-45

- **Identity of Jesus** – Jesus is revealed as the Messiah and Son of God, affirmed by the Father and acknowledged by spiritual forces.
- **Kingdom of God** – Jesus proclaims that God's reign has arrived and calls people to repent and believe the good news.
- **Authority and Power** – Jesus teaches, heals, and casts out demons with divine authority, showing God's rule in action.
- **Conflict with Evil** – From the wilderness to the synagogue, Jesus confronts and overcomes Satan and unclean spirits.
- **Discipleship and Call** – Jesus calls ordinary people to follow him and to reorder their priorities and allegiance.
- **The Messianic Secret** – Jesus commands others to keep silent about his identity.

Notes:

Isaiah 64:1 is part of a communal lament and prayer from the Israelites living in exile. In the passage leading up to the verse (READ Isaiah 63:7-29) they express their longing for...

- **God's felt presence** – They remembered how God had been with them in the past and longed for Him to be near again, not distant or silent.
- **Deliverance from oppression** – They wanted God to intervene decisively against their enemies, as He had done in the Exodus.
- **A renewed relationship with God** – Aware of their sin and rebellion, they longed for restoration, mercy, and forgiveness.
- **God's powerful intervention** – The cry to “rend the heavens and come down” expresses a desire for God to act unmistakably and dramatically in history.
- **Guidance and leadership** – They longed for God to once again lead His people, rather than leaving them to wander in confusion and fear.
- **Hope beyond judgment** – Even while acknowledging guilt, the people hoped God would act not only in judgment, but in saving compassion.

In short, **they were longing for God Himself**—His presence, His power, and His saving action to break into their broken situation.

Mark 1 presents Jesus as God's answer to that longing.