

# Preparing for Leadership

**Key Verse:** *“There came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*  
—Mark 1:11

**Selected Scripture:**  
Mark 1:4-13

## THE FIRST VERSE OF

Mark's Gospel describes Jesus as “Christ” and “Son” of God. He then moves immediately to connect John coming as a messenger of God who would “prepare . . . the way of the Lord.” (Mark 1:3) He points to this messenger as the one of which the prophet spoke in Isaiah 40:3-5. There we read, “The voice of

him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

John was baptizing in the wilderness, preaching baptism and repentance unto the “forgiveness of sins.” (Mark 1:4, *Marginal Translation*) “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.” (vs. 6) He made clear that he was not the Messiah 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.” John continues, “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (vss. 7,8) John’s baptism was merely preparatory to the coming of the Lord.

Jesus had been living in Nazareth of Galilee, the northern portion of Israel. It was the town in which Joseph and Mary had lived prior to Jesus’ birth; and they had returned there after their sojourn in Egypt. During the time John was preaching, Jesus came to John to be baptized in the Jordan River. “Straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (vss. 10,11) Surely, Jesus was fully qualified as “Christ, the Son of God.”—vs. 1

Immediately, the Spirit drove him into the wilderness, where for “forty days, [he was] tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.” (vss. 12,13) His response to Satan’s three temptations was swift and clear—“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. . . . It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. . . . It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matt. 4:4,7,10)

Jesus’ time in the wilderness was a time of testing. Unlike the ancient Israelites who had also been tried in the wilderness, and often found wanting during their journey to the promised land, Jesus always proved faithful. How can we likewise be sure that God will say of what we have done, or are planning to do, “With you I am well pleased”? We may think we are doing God’s will, in line with his purposes as we see them. Jesus’ overcoming experiences over Satan’s testing surely provided additional strength for him, and assurance to survive the difficult trials that lay ahead. In our walk in the narrow way, let us always follow Jesus, our example. ■