

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Living in the Spirit

Lesson 1: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Bible Text

Mark 1:1-8

Memory Verse

"I have baptized you with water. But He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8)

Word List

baptize, baptism: to put something in a liquid so that all parts are completely covered

confess: to admit that you did something wrong or illegal

Messiah: a person who is expected to save people from a very bad situation. Messiah and Christ have the same meaning.

repent: to feel or show that you are sorry for something bad or wrong that you did and that you want to do what is right

When I was a young girl at summer camp, I sat by the side of a beautiful lake. The weather was hot. I splashed myself to try to stay cool, but it did not help much. Some of the other kids were in the water, laughing and playing. I was too afraid to join them. After a long time, I became brave enough to jump in the lake with the others. It felt great to be in

the cool water. I was able to do many things I could not do on the land. I could swim and float and play water games. I was almost a different person when I was fully in the water.

I cooled off only when I got fully wet. The splashing was not enough.

As Christians, new believers are covered in water in **baptism**. But Christian baptism is much more than just getting wet. Christian baptism means being changed by God's Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel of Mark, we read about the first Christian baptisms. We learn about the coming Savior who would **baptize** with the Holy Spirit, not just with water.

The Coming Good News (Mark 1:1-3)

1 The Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

2 begins with the words of the early preachers:

"Listen! I will send My helper to carry the news ahead of you. He will make the way ready.

3 His voice calls out in the desert, 'Make the way ready for the Lord. Make the road straight for Him!'"

Life was hard 2,000 years ago in Judea, the land that is now called Israel. Most people were very poor. The great Roman Empire was in charge of the government. The Roman rulers made the people pay unfair amounts of

taxes. They did not seem to care about people. They did not honor God as the Jewish people did.

The people of Judea knew that their land had once been very powerful and blessed by God. They hoped and dreamed that God would bless them and let Israel be an important nation again.

Some people remembered what was written in their holy scrolls. These are the books we call the Old Testament. About 700 years earlier, Isaiah was one of the great preachers. He wrote that God would send a very special person who would save the people. This special one would be the Messiah — the Christ, God's chosen person.

About 300 years after Isaiah, Malachi was another great preacher. Malachi, wrote that before the Messiah or Christ came, God would send a helper. This helper would bring the news of the Messiah who was to come.

The Book of Mark began with these promises from hundreds of years earlier. There was Good News coming, and God was telling the people to get ready.

John's Preaching (Mark 1:4-6)

4 John the Baptist preached in the desert. He preached that people should be baptized because they were sorry for their sins and had turned from them. And they would be forgiven.

5 People from over all the country of Judea and from Jerusalem came to him. They told of their sins and were baptized by John in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of hair from camels. He had a leather belt around him. His food was locusts and wild honey.

The helper who was bringing the Good News was named John. John knew his job was to help the people of Israel get ready for the Messiah.

John lived in the desert, far away from the towns where the people lived. He stayed by the Jordan River and people came to him. He lived a very simple life and wore rough clothes and ate wild food.

Many people knew that one of the old holy preachers, Elijah, also wore rough clothes and ate wild food. Many people thought that John was just like Elijah because he told the people to **confess** their sins and **repent**. John also taught the people that God would forgive their sins when they confessed and repented.

John stood in the water of the Jordan River. When the people confessed their sin, they would go to John. He would help them go under the water and then come back out. This was called baptizing. John baptized them so everyone could understand that they had

changed their hearts and minds.

The water did not clean away their sins. The water only helped them and other people understand that they had changed their minds and hearts. The baptism helped them remember that God forgave them.

Jesus and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:7-8)

7 He preached, saying, “One is coming after me Who is greater than I. I am not good enough to get down and help Him take off His shoes.

8 I have baptized you with water. But He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Many people came to John to be baptized. They were excited to confess their sins and repent. They were glad to be forgiven and baptized.

He knew that the Messiah was coming. He knew that the Messiah would be much more important than he was. John knew that

he was just the preacher to help the people get ready for the Messiah.

When John preached, he made sure the people knew there was someone much more important who was coming soon. The people thought John was a holy man and an important preacher. But he told them he was not even good enough to be a servant to the Messiah. He was not good enough to get down and help the Messiah take off His shoes.

John told the people that the Messiah would have much greater power from God. John said, “I have baptized you with water. But He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Messiah would not baptize with water. He would not just get people wet so they could dry off again. When the Messiah came, the people would also confess their sins and repent. But there would be a different kind of change than just getting wet in baptism. The Messiah would bring God’s Spirit to the people.

The Jewish people knew a little bit about the Holy Spirit. They knew the story of creation in their Scriptures. “The Spirit of God was moving over the top of the waters” (Genesis 1:2) when God created the heavens and the earth.

They knew the Holy Spirit came on people such as Moses, King David, and Daniel to help them do great and powerful

Things to Think About

1. Why do you think Mark began his Gospel with words from the old preachers?
2. What does it mean to confess your sin and repent? What does that have to do with being forgiven?
3. How did John prepare the way for the coming Messiah?
4. Why do you think Christians are baptized? Do you think baptism makes someone a Christian? Why or why not?

works. What they did not know was that when the Messiah came, the Holy Spirit would come to them, too. The Holy Spirit would stay with them forever.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit would not be something people could see or feel. The baptism with the Holy Spirit would be something that happened between each person and God. It would change them on the inside. It would change them forever.

Things to Remember

The people who lived in Israel 2,000 years ago knew a lot about their past. They knew that their nation had once been great and blessed by God. They knew that the old preachers spoke of God's promise that they would be blessed again someday. When John began to preach in the desert, they remembered what they had learned from the old preachers. They were excited that John was helping them confess their sins, repent, and be forgiven. They were excited to be baptized as a way to remember their new commitment to God.

The people also knew something about the Holy Spirit. They knew that the Holy Spirit was sent by God. It was a powerful force that helped people do God's work.

When John said the coming Messiah would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, they knew this was Good News.

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