

BIB203 NT1 Life of Christ

Unit 3b Matthew's Use of Mark

Presented by the



LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

For Use by the

Blue Letter Bible Institute

[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)

A Ministry of the

Blue Letter Bible

[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)

In this segment, we're going to be dealing with Matthew's use of Mark. So we're only looking at the two synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Mark. Again, Mark is the first composition as far as we can determine based on exhaustive scholarship and research beginning in the late 18th, early 19th century. So we want to look at how Matthew uses Mark. So I would have you open your Bibles, if you would, to Matthew 1. And we just kind of want to walk through the sequence of Matthew 1 to 3, at least initially. And if further examples are necessary to drive the point home, then we will do that.

The first thing I want you to notice is that when you look at the Gospel of Matthew and you hold your place in Matthew and you look at Mark, what we just looked at with Mark with respect to its content is that the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the Gospel of Mark, begins with the ministry of John the Baptist. But here in Matthew, we start off in 1:1, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. And then from verses 2 to 17, you have a genealogical record and description of Jesus' origins, highlighting the fact that he is the son of David and the son of Abraham. Starting in verse 18, you have the description of the birth of Jesus Christ, the backstory. His mother Mary is betrothed to Joseph. She is with child. Her husband Joseph resolves to divorce her quickly. In point of fact, the phrase "her husband Joseph" is more of a gloss than anything else. Jewish betrothal was tantamount to marriage, which would explain why it is translated that way. But the bottom line, the main picture that we have here is that Joseph and Mary are not married as of yet. They are engaged to be married. In the eyes of the community of Nazareth, they are practically married but they aren't living together. It's binding, in other words. So he's not her husband. He is, to use our terminology, her fiancé. So we see that description here. So after the angel tells him in a dream to take Mary to himself, he does. And we read in verse 24 that he, Joseph, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife but knew her not. He didn't know her in marital intimacy until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus. If you're simply reading Matthew, then it looks as though he married Mary on the spot and they had no marital intimacy until Jesus was born. That's how it reads. I'll say more on that at some other time.

In chapter 2, you have the visit of the wise men. It tells us, "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem." And the story goes, they came to Jerusalem asking "Where is the king of the Jews?" And all of Jerusalem was troubled. Herod the Great made some inquiries and his scribes gave him the prophetic text that depicted the birth of the ruler who would shepherd Israel. We see that in verse 6 of chapter 2. "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." These wise men come to Jerusalem. They have followed a star, they claim. So Herod summons the wise men and determines from them when they had seen the star appear. And he sends them to Bethlehem, requesting that when they find the child, they should return back to him and apprise him of the child's whereabouts. So they find the child. When they leave Herod, they find the child because the star goes on before them and comes and stands on where the child is. They go in. They see the child. They fall down. They worship him. They give him gifts. They go to bed. They dream, "Don't go back to Herod." (Verse 12 of chapter 2) And they go back to their home country by another route.

The next passage, verse 13, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph, warns him to take the child and his mother and roughly to Egypt, and he does. Herod finds out that he's been tricked by the wise men and so he kills all of the male children in Bethlehem and in all of that region who were two years old and under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. This is chapter 2 verse 16. So

he kills children two years old and under. So that tells us that he ascertains the time of the star appearing and it's been about two years. So he basically seeks to wipe out all the children in the area in hopes of getting the one child that he perceives to be a threat to him. Herod dies and an angel of the Lord appears in a dream to Joseph (this is in verse 19 of chapter 2), advises him to return back into the land because those who seek the young child's life had died. They come back into Israel, but he finds out that Herod Archelaus, Herod the Great's son, is reigning in Judea. So he has to push on to Nazareth of Galilee, which is where he was engaged to Mary in the first place. And for this reason, he is called a Nazarene.

So I just did a flyover, a summarization of Matthew 1 to 2. What does that mean? Well, this section of the Gospel of Matthew is Matthew's material. He did not get this material from Mark. This is his own material. This is his own compilation of the oral traditions that he has received as an authorized eyewitness of Jesus. He is one of the twelve apostles. He has gathered stories. He knows the origin stories. Certainly he and the other apostles talked about it with Jesus as they went about their peripatetic ministry up and down Galilee and even up to Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. So he would know the story. He would know who Jesus was on an intimate level. He would have come to understand, in light of the resurrection, who Jesus was as he received instruction from Jesus about Jesus himself and how the Scriptures point to him in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms, the threefold division of the Hebrew Bible which you see in Luke 24:44 and 45, where Jesus, as he's eating a piece of broiled fish, says to them, "This is what I said to you, that all these things..." that Christ had to suffer all these things. "These things had to be fulfilled. These things speak about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms about me." The next verse says he opened their understanding so that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

So Matthew would have been subjected to all of that. So he has this material, and scholars call that material M material, as we've said before. So that's M material. Matthew 1 and 2 is virtually M material. So he has not used Mark yet. That's the point. He hasn't used Mark yet. He has placed his own material ahead of his use of Mark, at least at this juncture, because he has his own material that buttresses and fits the narrative that Mark begins with: the ministry of John the Baptist. So that takes us to Matthew 3:1-12. And let's look at it together.

It reads, "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.' Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'"

So that's Matthew 3:1-12. Now, the correlation passage, his usage of Mark is what we want to look at. So please hold your place here and come with me to Mark 1:1-8. Of course, it will be familiar to you because in the previous segments, we were dealing with the content of Mark and I read part of that to you. At this point, what I want to do is I want to compare the passages. So we've just read Matthew 3:1-12. Here's the question. How does Matthew use Mark? Well, okay. So we look at Mark 1. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,'" Mark writes according to his tradition. And then you see verse 3. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" So Matthew uses the latter portion of the prophetic utterance that Mark uses.

I should point out something else too as we're crisscrossing Matthew and Mark. When Mark says, "This is written in Isaiah the prophet," Isaiah the prophet doesn't actually write all of this. It's only verse 3 that pertains to Isaiah, and that's Isaiah 40. But the rest of it comes from Malachi 3:1. There is an allusion to Exodus 23:20. So what's Mark doing? Well, back then, they had roles. They had the Major Prophets, but then they also had the Minor Prophets, and they tended to be part of the same scroll. So Mark, to his mind, is being as accurate as possible. It's written in the scroll of Isaiah the prophet. He doesn't actually nail down where the text is coming from, right? But basically, the quotation in Mark is a combination of Malachi 3:1. "Behold, I send my messenger before my face. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come into his temple." That's Malachi 3:1. And then you have this combination with Isaiah 40:3, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" So you see what Matthew does. He removes Malachi 3:1, as it were. And I put "removes" in quotes. Another way to say it is he doesn't use it. He just uses Isaiah 40:3 as he constructs under the impress of the Holy Spirit the ministry of John the Baptist.

And then he goes. He talks about what John wore: camel's hair garment, leather belt around the waist. His food: locusts and wild honey. Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan were going out to him and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. So where Mark says all the country of Judea and all of Jerusalem, Matthew says, "Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan." So he adds a little bit more detail based on his understanding of the tradition. We also see in Mark 1:7-8 John's preaching. "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Well, what Matthew does is he talks about the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming to his baptism, his castigation of them. "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit matching your repentance. That is, if your repentance is true. Don't say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' That doesn't work that way."

And Matthew talks about John saying "The axe is laid to the root of the trees. (3:10) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I." So Matthew adds "I baptize you with water for repentance." Where Mark ends "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit," Matthew adds, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." He adds the further detail. (Verse 12) "His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So all of that, all of the additions, all of the detail that you don't see in Mark, that is Matthew's material. That's M material, as some scholars put it. So you see Matthew's use of Mark. And this is just one

example. Matthew runs for 28 chapters. Mark runs for 16. They're about the same length. And so you see how creative this process gets under the impress of the Holy Spirit with this one example. So in verse 12, as we see Matthew using Mark in the way that he does, he adds this detail. "His winnowing fork is in his hand." You don't see that in Mark. "And he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So this is an example, in total, of how Matthew, after inserting his own material in chapters 1 and 2, now he uses Mark with respect to the ministry of John the Baptist under the impress of the Holy Spirit.

There's another example that I want to add to this discussion, and it is briefer. It involves the very next passage, the baptism of Jesus. And so we read in verses 13 to 17 that "Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

So when we look at Mark (and let me reacquire my place here), that would be Mark 1:9-11, which reads, "In those days Jesus came up from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan," whereas you have Matthew saying "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him." Bit of arrangement of word order, but the same content. And what you see in verse 10 of Mark 1, "And when he came up out of the water." So that presupposes that Jesus already was baptized by John. And we read, "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.'" Here, in Matthew's use of Mark, he adds his own material. Verse 14 of Matthew 3: "John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" So Matthew expands the material just a bit more, but essentially the same content. So that's another example of what Matthew does. And these are not the only examples. The structure of the examples, the dynamic, the thrust of the examples don't necessarily all fall along these lines. Sometimes they are more complex than that.