

# 'Jesus came.'- Mar 1:9.

by G. Campbell Morgan

---

*G. Campbell Morgan's sermon explores the significance of Jesus' baptism, anointing, and temptation as foundational events in the Gospel of Mark that reveal His identity and mission.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 53:3, Matthew 3:15, Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:4-13, Luke 3:22, John 1:29, Romans 5:8

**Topics:** "Identification with Sinners", "The Beginning of the Gospel"

---

## Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the significance of Jesus' coming from Nazareth, highlighting His identification with humanity through baptism, anointing, and temptation. He explains that Jesus, though sinless, chose to be baptized to fulfill righteousness and to identify with sinners, thus beginning His ministry. The sermon illustrates how Jesus' baptism marked His dedication to His mission, receiving the Holy Spirit's empowerment, and the Father's affirmation of His Sonship. Morgan also discusses the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness, underscoring His moral victory and role as the Servant of God. Ultimately, the message reveals the profound mystery of Jesus' incarnation and His purpose to establish God's Kingdom.

---

## Transcript

Mar 1:4-13.

THESE are the central words of this first paragraph of the Gospel of Mark. The subject of the book, as we have seen, is that of how "the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God" began. The story is developed along the lines suggested by that opening description of the Servant of Jehovah. He is referred to as Jesus consistently, through all the first stages to the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, and never as Christ. At Caesarea Philippi He was confessed to be the Christ by Peter, and subsequently that title recurs five times. Jesus used it of Himself (Mar 9:41); He used it of the predicted Messiah when speaking of His relationship to David (Mar 12:35); He used it when warning His disciples against the coming of false Christs (Mar 13:21); the high priest used it when challenging Him as to who He was (Mar 14:61); and finally the high priests used it when they mocked Him in the hour of His dying (Mar 15:32).

The designation, Son of God, was twice made use of before Caesarea Philippi, on each occasion by an evil spirit. Apart from these instances it is never found until the high priest challenged Him in the words, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and He replied, "I am." It is found finally in the story of the crucifixion, when the centurion after the death of Jesus said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

We shall best apprehend the early part of the story as we look at Him as He is presented by the name Jesus, divesting ourselves of many of those attitudes of mind which are necessary as we know Him fully as the Christ, and as the Son of God. In order that we may come to a more perfect apprehension of the meaning of that title, of that sacred and mystic designation, we shall attempt to see Him first as these men saw Him, as Jesus of Nazareth.

In this paragraph we have the story of the beginning of the Beginning of the Gospel. In a few sentences, full of life and colour, Mark gives an account of the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, whose coming had been foretold by Malachi, and whose mission had been described by Isaiah. Then, with brevity and haste, but most graphically, he records the stages through which Jesus of Nazareth, the Servant of Jehovah passed to the actual service to which He was appointed.

In a phrase, "From Nazareth of Galilee," he refers to the past; and then records the facts of His baptism, His anointing, and His temptation. This is how "the beginning of the Gospel" began. Jesus came from Nazareth to baptism, anointing, and temptation. These facts had a bearing on His service, and therefore are recorded. Let us consider them in that order, and in that relation.

Jesus came "from Nazareth of Galilee," where He had been the Self-emptied One for a generation, one of the people; undistinguishable from other men by the eyes of those who looked upon Him; undiscovered as to any deep secret of personality, or any profound anointing for service. He had borne one of the most commonplace names of the day, Jesus, which is the Greek form of Joshua. The probability is that there were many named Joshua in Nazareth and Jerusalem, and throughout that district. Nobody distinguished Him from others by the name; no halo was round His brow; there was nothing strange about Him; He was one of the crowd, a man among men.

He came from Nazareth, of which place so devout and sincere and simple a soul as Nathaniel said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He came from Galilee, referred to always with contempt by the Judaeans, "Galilee o the Gentiles!"

Nazareth to Jesus had been the place of growth from boyhood to manhood; the place where He had grown in wisdom as well as in stature; the place where He had grown in grace with God and with men. Nazareth had been to Him moreover the place of ordinary human experiences, where He had faced ordinary human responsibilities in fellowship with God; a fellowship strange and mystic, different from that experienced by other men, but a fellowship which was the birthright of all men. There in Nazareth He had wrought through the working days; and on the recurring Sabbaths, "as His custom was" He had mingled with the worshippers, reading the law, and hearing it expounded, being brought up in the atmosphere of the conscious nearness of Jehovah, the God of His fathers. There, He had passed through busy days, a carpenter, learning the use of tools until He mastered them, making yokes and ploughs, and building houses. He was an ordinary workman, bearing ordinary human responsibilities, and entering into ordinary human experiences.

But Nazareth had been more than all this to Him. It had been the place of quietness, the place of seclusion, the place of meditation. In the statement that He grew in grace with men is revealed the fact that He was undisturbed by hostilities and criticisms. There in the quietness of the years, from boyhood's age of twelve to manhood's age of thirty, He had the opportunity of the thinking that comes to every man who has the high privilege of spending early years in a quiet country town, out of the way of the rush of cities.

From all this "Jesus came"; and He came "in those days," when in Judaea there were strange, religious awakenings under the ministry of John; when that proud, self-centered countryside around Jerusalem was moved to its heart as it had not been for long, by that wonderful ministry; when men were pouring out, to listen to the strange ascetic preacher who lashed them with whips, and ploughed up their conscience, and called them to repentance; and when they, repenting, went out from Judaea and Jerusalem to his baptism, confessing their sins. In that hour of spiritual and religious revival the young Carpenter turned His back upon Nazareth and came. So the day of the Gospel dawned.

He came to baptism, anointing, and temptation. In our study of this Gospel we may deal with these stories with the brevity that characterizes the narrative itself.

He came to baptism. In order to understand the meaning of His coming to baptism, the ordinary facts concerning the ministry of John must be remembered. John had been preaching repentance unto remission of sins, not repentance for remission of sins. There could be no remission of sins apart from the ministry of Jesus. It was repentance unto remission of sins. John had exercised a ministry that produced repentance, in order to prepare for a ministry that should issue in remission. That is the reason why Mark is more particular than Matthew at this point to record one aspect of the burden of the preaching of John. He himself declared, "There cometh after me He that is mightier than I, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." Then he defined his own declaration. "I baptized you with water"-which is the symbol of washing, and, accompanies repentance-"but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit"-which is not a symbol, but a strength, renewing and regenerating the life, through which remission of sins shall come, and the beginning of a new life with new possibilities. John's ministry was to produce repentance unto remission; and to declare the coming of the One Who should accomplish all that was made necessary by repentance. To that ministry Jesus now came.

He "was baptized." Here we are face to face with a most amazing fact. If John's baptism was for repentance, and was the outward sign of repenting souls, how are we to understand this baptizing of Jesus? Matthew tells us that when John saw Him coming, he looked at Him and said, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" It is of supreme importance that we understand that when John said that, he did not know Who Jesus was, he did not know that He was the Messiah. John himself distinctly declared that he did not know the Messiah until he saw the Holy Spirit descending upon Him. John looked into those eyes;-John, than whom a greater never had been born of women as Jesus said, who in many respects was the greatest of the long line of Hebrew prophets; John, the man of clear moral perception, who had been looking fearlessly, as prophets ever do, into the eyes of the crowds that gathered about him; John looked into the eyes of this One Who came to be baptized, and said: No, this is a baptism of repentance! I am here to baptize men repenting of sins! I need to be baptized of Thee! Comest Thou to me? This was a prophetic recognition and declaration of the sinlessness of Jesus.

Then why was He baptized? He was baptized as a repenting soul. His also, was a baptism of repentance. His also was a baptism of the confession of sins. In that hour He repented, He confessed sins. But the repentance was not for Himself, the sins were not His own. In that hour He identified Himself with the multitudes who had been thronging out to baptism, identified Himself with them in the consciousness of sin, in repentance for it, in confession of it. In that hour of baptism we see the most solemn and wonderful sight of the Servant of God, Who had come from the silence and seclusion of Nazareth, taking upon Himself the burden of human sin, counting it as if it were His own sin, doing that to which an apostolic writer ultimately referred by declaring, "He was made sin."

So "Jesus came," in the hour of widespread concern and change of mind, to identify Himself with sinners that they might be identified with Him, thus, as Matthew tells us that He Himself said, "to fulfill all righteousness." Righteousness is never fulfilled by repentance. Repentance will lead toward it, repentance is the condition for it; but repentance alone can never produce righteousness. He repented, and confessed sins, as symbolizing the fact that He, the Sinless, was identifying Himself with the sinful, in order that, in an infinite mystery, for ever beyond our understanding, in that identification, through infinite love and compassion, righteousness should become possible to the sinners whose sins He bore, and whose sorrows He endured. Thus He came to a baptism that indicated the method of His service as that of an identifying of Himself with sinning men; of being numbered with the transgressors, that He might bear the sins of many, as Isaiah had said, when speaking of this Servant of God.

What immediately followed? "Straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." The word "straightway" marks the immediateness of heaven's response to all that was suggested by His baptism. Luke alone declares that when thus the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended, Jesus was praying. He descended to the waters of baptism, was immersed beneath them, emerged from them, came to the banks, and prayed. Then, "straightway," in that hour, He was endued for that service to which He had now dedicated Himself. His baptism was His act of dedication, the coming of the Spirit was God's act of consecration. Not that here and now Jesus of Nazareth received the Spirit of God for the first time. His whole being was attended by the operation of the Spirit. His very human life was due to the mystic and mighty operation of the Spirit, and all the years in Nazareth were years in which He had been filled with the Spirit. Yet this was something new, something separate, something remarkably beautiful for Him and for us, to the end of time. An enduement of the Spirit was given to Him as the Servant of God in a new sense, in a new significance, and with new powers.

This is the only occasion in the whole Bible where the Spirit is referred to as taking this particular form of manifestation. He came as a dove; and so as the symbol of the infinite gentleness and harmlessness of Jesus of Nazareth. There came an hour when in the teaching of Jesus He said to His disciples that they were to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Here the harmlessness of Jesus was suggested, and that quality of harmlessness as necessary, if the work to which He had dedicated Himself was to be accomplished.

Yet to Him, a Hebrew after the flesh, this symbolic form had more in it than the suggestiveness of harmlessness. It was in itself a suggestion of sacrifice on the lowest level; on the lowest level that is, not as to intrinsic value, but as to the capacity of a worshipper. The poorest, who could bring nothing else, were permitted to bring a dove as their offering for sin. Now, in an infinite beauty harmonizing with the Self-emptying of the Son of God, the Spirit of God took this form of the dove, the symbol of harmlessness and of sacrifice brought to the level of the poorest. In that hour of anointing there came to Him enablement for the service to which He had formally dedicated Himself, thus fulfilling the word of Isaiah, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Chosen, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up His voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street."

There came to Him also the Father's ratification, the voice that sounded in His own soul, whether others heard it or not we have no means of knowing. To translate it literally, this is what the voice said: "Thou art the Son of Me; the Beloved. In Thee I am well pleased." By the symbol of His baptism He had manifested His dedication to all the mystery of His suffering and death. Then, said the Voice, "Thou art the Son of Me,

My Beloved." There came a day later on in His ministry, when He said, "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life." In that hour of dedication, He had testimony borne to Him by His Father, of the Divine approval of that act of dedication by which He presently would fulfill righteousness in men through and beyond repentance, by giving them remission z regeneration, and renewal.

Again, the Voice said, "In Thee I am well pleased." The words, "My Chosen, in whom My soul delighteth" had been written by Isaiah long before; and Mark declared, This is the story of the beginning of the Gospel of which Isaiah wrote; this is how it came to be.

Here then we see Him, setting His face toward His mission, receiving the enduement enabling Him to fulfill it, and the ratification within His soul of the fact that He was cooperating with God. So He came, not only to identification with sinners, but to all the resources of God, in order that He might accomplish His mission.

Finally He came to temptation. Here again, with that illuminative suggestiveness that characterizes Mark, he used words that arrest us: "And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." Both Matthew and Luke indicate the fact that He went into the wilderness under the guidance of the Spirit, but Mark has used a strange word. "The Spirit driveth Him forth"; quite literally, "the Spirit casteth Him forth." It is the very word afterward employed of the casting out of demons by Christ.

We shall come nearer to the spiritual value if we see the physical fact, and get nearer to the profound intention of the writer as we look at the humanness of the story. As we read that "the Spirit driveth Him forth," casteth Him out, there comes before the vision a graphic picture of Jesus of Nazareth hastening, hurrying to the wilderness. No leisured, meditative walk this, but swift, impetuous movement, as of one driven irresistibly forth, so that there could be no halting. The resolve of His soul was revealed in His baptism. The resources at His disposal for the fulfilling of His resolve had been revealed in His anointing. Now He hastened to face the foe; not with a spirit buoyant perchance, but with a spirit filled with foreboding, for this was real temptation, actual temptation. The Spirit after His anointing drove Him to face the forces that ruin and blight and blast and spoil humanity.

Mark here records that which is most remarkable; not that He was in the wilderness for forty days and afterward was tempted, but that He was "forty days tempted of Satan." We have here no account of the specific temptations, but we are not wronging the Gospel story if We assume that the temptations of the forty days were along the lines revealed by Matthew and Luke as they record the story of the final temptations, for in those stories we have an exhaustive picture of every avenue along which evil can approach Man soul. Temptation today seems very varied, but it may always be classified under one of these headings.

When He began to preach He said, "The Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel." The Kingdom of God is at hand. In that declaration was revealed the master passion of His Service. Why did He descend to the waters of baptism? To fulfill righteousness. Righteousness is the establishment of Divine Kingship, the setting up of the Kingdom of God. In order to do that it was necessary that He should deal with existing conditions of location, necessity, and failure. It must be a Kingdom of bread, dealing with man's material necessities; but it must go infinitely beneath that, it must be a Kingdom of fellowship with God, dealing with man's spiritual nature. It must also be a Kingdom of beauty and of glory, which, in its ultimate establishment, shall realize all the highest things of beauty in the Being of God.

Jesus had come to establish that Kingdom, and for forty days He was tempted; tempted by His hunger to wonder whether God cared; tempted in the presence of the tremendous work that had opened out before Him, as to how far He might venture outside the Divine direction, how far He might proceed upon His own initiative; tempted as to whether the Kingdoms of the world, with all their glory and beauty, might not be gained apart from the method symbolized by His baptism.

The one inspiration of such service as that to which He had dedicated Himself, must be threefold; the inspiration of love, of faith, and of hope. For forty days He was tempted to doubt the love, to traffic with the faith, to question the hope; and at the end of forty days these things became most devilish, most concrete, and most terrific. It was real temptation! I know the old controversy of the theologians and the scholars as to the peccability of Christ. But unless He was tempted, then He was not tempted; unless He felt the lure of the suggestions made, there was no temptation! This lasted for forty days; it was continuous, insistent!

How did it all end? The statement of Mark is wonderfully graphic. He does not say anything about the victories as does Matthew or Luke; but simply says, "And He was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him." Many expositors say that the sentence, "He was with the wild beasts" is intended to suggest the terribleness of the situation. I do not so read it. The Greek preposition marks the closest association and unity. "He was with the wild beasts"; but they were not wild with Him! He was God's archetypal Man, realizing the first Divine intention of a perfect and beneficent mastery over the lower creation. The beasts that were wild with other men gathered about Him in the wilderness and knew their Master, not as God, but as man in the perfection and sinlessness of His nature. "He was with the wild beasts." I never go to the Zoological Gardens without wishing I could play with the lions! In the Kingdom that is to be, the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them. Then all their ferocity will have vanished. "He was with the wild beasts." Morally victorious, He was Master of the creation beneath Him, and angels ran upon His errands, for such is the real suggestiveness of the word. Thus He is seen as God's Man, perfect in spite of temptation!

So "Jesus came from Nazareth," where for thirty years He had lived the self-emptied life; where for thirty years He had been without the prerogatives of sovereignty which were His in the inherent mystery of His being; where for thirty years He had been subject to parents and to human conditions. He came to men, and found them sinning, and joining them, repented with them and was baptized. He came to God, and had the answer of the anointing of His Spirit, and the ratification of His high purpose. He came to Satan, and entered into conflict with him, and mastered him.

How can I better end than by quoting again the words of Isaiah? "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Chosen, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him." So spake Jehovah of Him centuries before He came. Thus spake Jehovah of Him in the hour of His coming. "Thou art the Son of Me, My Beloved; in Thee I am well pleased."

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/g-campbell-morgan/jesus-came-mar-19/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**