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**International**  
**Sunday School**  
**Lesson**  
**—for—**  
**JANUARY 6, 1963**  
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### JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS MINISTRY

Memory Selection: "Because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted." (Hebrews 2:18)

Lesson Text: Mark 1:1-13.

The purpose of our study today is to introduce the Gospel of Mark and to consider the preparation that Jesus and others made for his ministry.

In understanding any book it is helpful to know something of its historical setting. This is especially true of the Book of Mark.

The Book of Mark is not a biography, nor a history of Jesus of

Nazareth. It is clearly and unapologetically evangelistic in its emphasis and in its purpose. It is the good news of one who was thoroughly human but unmistakably the Son of God. It is directed to those who were already Christians, but who were under persecution for their Christianity. They were disturbed by the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, and faced with imminent martyrdom themselves.

Mark was written to demonstrate to the Christian community in Rome the power and purpose of Jesus Christ, whose own life and death and life after death is the only answer to suffering and discouraged men. It is the "good news" of the strong Son of God whose mighty deeds overcame the sinister forces which blocked and beset him, and even put him to death. In an understanding of the purpose of the death of Jesus Christ, traced through the condensed account of his active ministry, revealed in his own life, and teachings, demonstrated in his in his death and vindicated in his resurrection, the Christian in the midst of his own crisis could find meaning and purpose, courage and spiritual resources.

The introductory section of the Gospel of Mark, with which we are concerned in this lesson, pre-

pares us for the Galilean ministry. Here there were two important occurrences: John baptized Jesus, and Jesus faced temptation. Jesus' baptism introduced his public ministry. It identified him with John the Baptist's proclamation that the kingdom of God was at hand. And it identified Jesus with the sinful nation that was seeking God's forgiveness and grace. Jesus comes to where we are; he shares in our condition so that he can open the way for us to return to God.

Again, the baptism was a time of vocational change for Jesus. He was now aware of a new task, and he undertook a new mission. The event of his baptism introduced this new work. Jesus was baptized by John. John the Baptist was the transitional figure. He stood between the old age and the new. He was a part of the old covenant; he looked forward to the coming of the Messiah; but he was unique, for to him was given the task of announcing that the new time had come.

Jesus was baptized. And the revelation of the new age began—but with conflict. The temptations indicate the dimensions of this conflict. In these temptations the nature of Jesus' messiahship was defined: Jesus would not be a political Messiah. He was not

to do the spectacular. He was to live faithfully by the word of commission he had heard. The temptation to turn stones into bread was a temptation for Jesus to prove to himself that he was the Messiah. But Jesus refused and stated that he must live by faith in the word of God which had been spoken to him. Then Jesus was told to jump from the top of the Temple, to prove to others that he was the Messiah. Do the unusual, the unexpected, the miraculous. But Jesus' refusal to do this meant that he would live among men and serve them as proof of his messiahship. And finally, Jesus was given the opportunity to rule the world. This was a temptation to be a political messiah. But again Jesus refused. He had come to minister, to serve, to give his life for many. He must fulfill this role.

Mark's Gospel is the story of God in man's history. God has identified himself with us; he has entered the struggle against evil in our history; and he has conquered the hostile forces. This account is the gospel—the good news. We are not alone in our world. We do not have to battle by ourselves against evil. God is with us. He has come to bring man into a living relationship with himself.

### Today's MEDITATION from The World's Most Widely Used Devotional Guide



### The Upper Room

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary. (Psalm 150:1.)

When we were building a new church at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, an architect friend criticized the large porch. He said if it had been included in the sanctuary, it would have given seating capacity for at least another hundred people.

We replied that the large porch was being made purposely so that the members of the congregation could greet friends there rather than inside the sanctuary. Our aim was to create a tradition of reverence in the sanctuary itself so that everyone would understand that when we speak in it we are worshipping God.

This does not mean that we

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## Roaring Fork News

MRS. HUBERT PANGLE, Correspondent

Dr. and Mrs. George Kimberly, Bess and George Jr., spent the holidays with his parents, Dr. and Mrs. David Kimberly of Bluff.

Wilson Payne and Andy Moore visited Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Pangle Sunday night.

Sunday of last week Mrs. For-

ris Holt and Edna Ruth visited Mr. and Mrs. Burnett Holt of Shubin.

Mr. and Mrs. Rochelle Parker, Jerry, Hilby and Betty June had Christmas dinner with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Parker.

Mrs. Carolina Pangle spent Sunday afternoon with Mrs. Cal-

lie Parker and Mrs. Fred Tran-

tham.

R. V. Ebbs of Mars Hill visited Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Parker Thurs-

day.

Mr. and Mrs. Weaver Allison visited Mr. and Mrs. Warren Gil-

lespie of Alexander Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Pangle and Ken spent Sunday afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. Dan Gardin.

Edna Ruth Holt and Jean Gato visited Marguerite Kimberly during the holidays.

Mrs. Zella Cummings and family of S. C., spent Christmas with her sister, Mrs. Tisha Fowler. Mrs. Forris Holt and James Fowler also had Christmas dinner with their mother.

Mrs. Carolina Pangle, Gary and Stevie Frisbee visited Becky Wyatt Saturday.

Johnny Payne visited Charlie Wyatt Saturday.

Mr. Harrison Brown, Mrs. Tisha Fowler and Mrs. Carolina Pangle and Shield Ann Fowler had dinner Wednesday with Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Wyatt.

Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Messer are visiting his mother, Mrs. Francis Kent at this time.

Gary and Stevie Frisbee visited Freddy Trantham late Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Gardin returned home Saturday after spending a week with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Gardin.

may never smile in church. It does mean that we never forget that it is our Father's house, a place where we come to do the most important thing in life — worship God.

Prayer: O Father of all mankind, we are grateful that Isaiah the prophet and Jesus Christ Thy Son called Thy house "a house of prayer for all nations." We bless Thee for the times that Thou hast met with us there. May we so reverence the place where we are accustomed to meeting with Thee that it shall be easy for others to find Thee, too. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Thought for the day: Our reverence for God creates holy associations with the everyday things of life.

—H. Ormonde McConnell  
(Haiti)

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### Hubert B. Meadows Passes Saturday; Rites Monday

Hubert B. Meadows, 57, of Rt. 1, Walnut, died in his home Saturday morning, Dec. 29, 1962, after a lengthy illness.

Services were held at 2 p. Monday in Barnard Free Will Baptist Church.

The Rev. Hobert Bullman and the Rev. Walter Wilson officiated. Burial was in Walnut Cemetery.

Surviving are the widow, Mrs. Gladys Ledford Meadows; three sons, Herbert of Rt. 4, Marshall, Braxton of Walnut and Ronnie of the home; two daughters, Miss Meba Jean Meadows of Asheville and Miss Sue Ann Meadows of the home; a stepdaughter, Mrs. Mona West of Walnut; a brother, Dolman of Buffalo, S. C.; and three sisters, Mrs. Allie Davis of Walnut, Mrs. Bertha Kent of drum, S. C., and Mrs. P. Putnam of Buffalo, S. C. Bowman Funeral Home in charge.

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