



Introduction*

The Gospel of Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, healed the sick, and died as a ransom for sinners. In addition to Jesus, Mark features three main groups of people: the disciples, the crowds, and the religious leaders, none of whom understood Jesus. When the time came for Jesus to go to the cross, the religious leaders arrested him, the disciples abandoned him, and the crowds jeered him. Only when he died alone on the cross did a Roman centurion recognize that he was the Son of God.

Question on Mark 1:8 - What does it mean when John the Baptist says, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."? What is the difference between John's and Jesus' Baptism?

The most obvious explanation for John's prophecy is found at Pentecost, when the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and tongues of fire appeared on their heads (Acts 2).

However, John spoke these words to the multitude, not just the apostles. So, remember that "baptize" is a Greek, not an English, word, that means "to wash." John's work was to prepare the way for Jesus, who would immerse the people in the Word, and His Word is inseparable from the Holy Spirit (Jn 6: 63). Jesus also immersed the people in the truth, by the clarity with which He explained and applied the Law and by His perception and the way He exposed all things to the light (Mt 5- 7; 23; Mk 12: 15; Jn 3: 18- 22).

Interestingly, the answer to this question is not found in the term Holy Spirit but in the term baptized. In Greek, baptized means "wash" or, better still, "awash" as in "immersed constantly."

The fulfillment of John's prophecy can be seen in three ways, though they are all, really, the same.

First, those who followed Jesus, especially the apostles, were immersed in the Holy Spirit because Jesus was constantly communicating His Spirit with His Word (Jn 6: 63).

Second, those who were present at Pentecost would also be awash in the Holy Spirit as He came upon them in the preaching of Peter and in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jl 2: 28- 32.

Third, anyone at any time who remains in the Word as Jesus calls us to (Jn 8: 31- 2; 15: 1- 7) is awash in the Holy Spirit.

Excerpts from The Big Book of New Testament Questions and Answers
Concordia Publishing House.
Rev. Dr. Michael Eschelbach

* Ryken, L. (Ed.). (2011). The ESV and the English Bible legacy. Wheaton, IL: Crossway. The ESV Preface, Explanation of Features, introductions to each book of the Bible: Mark

Catechism Connection: Baptism, The Third Part

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” (Titus 3:5–8)

Luther, Martin. Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation - 2017 Edition (Kindle Locations 273-281). Concordia Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

“The Reign of God Has Come Near”

Mark 1:9-20

⁹ It was in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan River by John.

¹⁰ Suddenly, while he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the spirit, like a dove, descending into him. ¹¹ A voice came from the heavens, “You are my son, the one I love! I am pleased with you!” ¹² Immediately the spirit cast him out into the wilderness ¹³ and he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the adversary. He was among wild animals and messengers were serving him.

¹⁴ Now after John was given over, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ saying, “The time is fulfilled and the reign of God has come near! Because of the gospel, transform and be faithful!” ¹⁶ As he passed beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw the fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, casting nets into the sea. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Come, follow me! I will make you fishers of men!” ¹⁸ Releasing their nets, they immediately followed him. ¹⁹ After advancing a little, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John as they were mending their nets in the boat. ²⁰ Immediately he called them and, after releasing their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers, they followed him.

What is significant about Jesus' place of origin?

What does it mean that the voice from heaven declares Jesus as his “son”?

What is the significance of Jesus' baptism?

What is “the adversary”?

What is significant about Jesus' testing?

What does John being “given over” illustrate?

What is the gospel that Jesus came proclaiming?

What is the "reign of God"?

What does Jesus' call and the responses of Simon, Andrew, James and John teach us?

What does it mean to be "fishers for men"?