

BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR



Spring Quarter
March | April | May 2023

Bible Expositor and Illuminator

SPRING QUARTER

March, April, May 2023

Looking Ahead	2
Editorials	3

Jesus Pleases His Father

UNIT I: By His Works

Mar. 5—Jesus' Baptism—Mark 1:4-13	4
Mar. 12—Overcoming Temptation with the Word—Matt. 4:1-14a	18
Mar. 19—Doing the Father's Work—John 5:19-29	32

UNIT II: By His Sacrifice

Mar. 26—Submitting to the Father's Will—Matt. 26:36-50	46
Apr. 2—Crucified for Sinners—Matt. 27:38-54	60
Apr. 9—Risen from the Dead! (Easter)—John 20:1-10, 19-20	74
Apr. 16—Proofs of the Resurrection—Luke 24:36-53	88

UNIT III: By His Teachings

Apr. 23—The Bread of Life—John 6:22-35	102
Apr. 30—The Light of the World—John 8:12-20; 12:44-46	116
May 7—The Good Shepherd—John 10:7-18	130
May 14—The Resurrection and the Life—John 11:17-27	144
May 21—The True Vine—John 15:1-17	158
May 28—Jesus Prays for Believers—John 17:6-21	172
Topics for Next Quarter	188
Paragraphs on Places and People	189
Daily Bible Readings	190
Review	191

Editor in Chief: Kenneth Sponsler



**Union
Gospel
Press**

Edited and published quarterly by
THE INCORPORATED TRUSTEES OF THE
GOSPEL WORKER SOCIETY
UNION GOSPEL PRESS DIVISION

Rev. W. B. Musselman, Founder

Price: \$7.69 per quarter*

*shipping and handling extra

ISBN 978-1-64495-311-2

LOOKING AHEAD

This quarter is titled “Jesus Pleases His Father,” and it gives us a fascinating glimpse into the manifold ways Jesus did that perfectly during His life and ministry on earth. Going through these lessons should challenge us to follow Him in pleasing the Father as well.

Our first unit begins with a lesson that takes us to Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River. It was there that the Father unambiguously announced His full approval of all that Jesus said, did, and thought: “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11).

Lesson 2 shows us how Jesus successfully met this challenge we all face: being tempted by Satan. In His use of God’s Word to repel the tempter, He left us the best example we could hope for. Lesson 3 underscores how Jesus always followed His Father’s example in all things (John 5:19).

Our second unit focuses specifically on the great sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf—His ultimate reason for coming. Lesson 4 shows us that this sacrifice was the hardest thing that any human has ever had to bear. Jesus quailed before it but resolved to see it through. Lesson 5, covering the crucifixion itself, brings us to the ultimate in love ever displayed for unworthy sinners.

Lesson 6, by contrast, brings us to Easter and Jesus’ triumphant resurrection. The resurrection was the Father’s ultimate stamp of approval on Jesus’ life and sacrifice (cf. Rom. 1:4). Lesson 7 shows us Jesus’ care for His disciples in remaining with them long enough to see that they were prepared for the mission ahead of them.

Our final unit turns our attention to Jesus’ teachings. We often do not consider how greatly Jesus pleased His Father by accurately presenting the truth to His hearers. In lessons 8 through 12, we focus on Jesus’ proclamation of Himself as the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, and the True Vine. We could spend years on these truths and never plumb their depths.

In our final lesson, we are allowed into the hallowed chamber of Jesus’ prayer life—specifically His prayer to the Father on our behalf. There we learn how much we are on His heart and how greatly He desires us to be one with Him, with the Father, and with one another.

—Kenneth Sponsler.

PLEASE NOTE: Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of The Incorporated Trustees of the Gospel Worker Society, Union Gospel Press Division. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and yieldedness to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. “They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

PLEASING THE FATHER, DISPLEASED MEN

KENNETH SPONSLER

The testimony of God the Father regarding Jesus is strikingly unambiguous: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased” (12:18). “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (17:5). God never made such unqualified statements about anyone else, for no one before or after Jesus ever lived a life that was fully pleasing to the Father, without blemish or lapses. He alone fulfilled God’s standard of holy perfection.

It may seem puzzling, then, that Jesus decidedly did not please all people. We might think that One who embodied perfect holiness and perfect love would attract everyone to His side, winning them over by His sheer goodness of heart and life. But over and over again we see in the Gospels that this was not so: “And they [the people in Nazareth] were offended in him” (Matt. 13:57). “And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him” (Mark 3:6). “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him” (John 10:31).

In going to the cross to bear our sins, Jesus fulfilled God’s loving plan to secure our salvation. We have perhaps concentrated on that truth so much that we sometimes forget the human side of the equation: Jesus was crucified because He aroused the anger, fear, and hatred of many people—chiefly the religious authorities of the day, but also of the crowds at large. The chief priests engineered the

trial of Jesus before Pilate, but the mob joined them in the cry for His execution (Matt. 27:20, 23). Jesus had no illusions about their attitude toward Him: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before” (John 15:18).

This picture, of course, must be kept in proper balance: Jesus did indeed attract great crowds and was immensely popular, especially early in His ministry. The disciples were the first to drop everything for Him. “And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him” (Mark 1:18). But they were not alone. The disciples came to Him while He was praying in an isolated locale to report, “All men seek for thee” (vs. 37). The crowds coming to hear Him teach were so great that He once had to borrow a boat to have room to speak to them (4:1-2).

This great following, motivated to a substantial degree by Jesus’ miracles of healing and provision (John 6:26), largely evaporated when He uttered truths too uncomfortable for many to hear (vss. 60, 66). And this fact leads us into the main reason why Jesus aroused opposition: He did not come to give people what they wanted but what they needed—a restored relationship with God that first required acknowledgment of their sin and their brokenness before Him.

Jesus told His own brothers, “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil” (John 7:7). His mission, although including innumerable acts of mercy and blessing, was first and fore-

(Editorials continued on page 186)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

MARK 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

NOTES

Jesus' Baptism

Lesson Text: Mark 1:4-13

Related Scriptures: Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 3:15-22;
Matthew 17:1-7; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36

TIME: A.D. 26

PLACES: wilderness of Judea; Jordan River

GOLDEN TEXT—"There came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11).

Introduction

The pivotal verse of the book of Mark is 10:45, which says, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Everything presented before this verse shows Jesus ministering to the people around Him, and everything presented after it shows Him moving toward and then giving His life as a ransom for sinners.

Each Gospel seems to purposely attempt to reach a specific group of people. When Matthew presented Jesus as the Messiah-King, he appealed to Jewish people. When Luke presented Him as the perfect Man, he appealed to Greek people. When John presented

Him as the Son of God, he appealed to everyone. Mark presented Jesus as the the Servant-Redeemer.

It is possible that Mark was the earliest of the Gospels, and there is evidence from church fathers that the author received much of his information from Peter. Mark is the John Mark mentioned in Acts 12:12, 25 and 13:5, 13. He was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10) and might have been the young man mentioned in Mark 14:51-52.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. THE PREPARER—Mark 1:4-8
- II. THE PREPARED—Mark 1:9-13

Exposition: Verse by Verse

THE PREPARER

MARK 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of

Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;