Sunday School Lesson

LESSON II
PREPARING FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE.—Mark 1:1-13

Golden Text—Make ye ready the way of the Lord. Mark 1:3.

THE LESSON IN ITS SETTING

Time.—We do not know exactly when John the Baptist began his preaching, but it is generally assigned to the summer and fall of A.D. 26, while the baptism of Jesus took place in January, A.D. 27, and was immediately followed by the temptation.

Place. — John's preaching took place in Judaea, the southern part of Palestine, which included the city of Jerusalem, though most of it was probably done on the eastern side of Judaea in the Wilderness near the Jordan River, where also Christ was baptized, and somewhere near which, possibly on the eastern side of the Jordan River, he was tempted.

1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This verse is a superscription or title, not for the first fifteen verses of Mark's Gospel, but for the entire book. All that Mark records, may be considered only as the beginning of the gospel of Christ. The word "gospel" meant simply "good news." In the phrase "the gospel of Jesus Christ" we are to understand the preposition "of" to mean "the gospel which concerns the Lord Jesus Christ," the message of good news which men would never have heard, and which never would have had an existence, except through the life and work of Jesus Christ.

In the very title "Jesus Christ" is the gospel deeply embedded, for the fact that there would come One to deliver his people, a prophet speaking for God, all are to be taken as not only good news, but the greatest of good news.

The Son of God. Mark and the early Christians knew the Lord Jesus to be the very Son of God, partaking of God's nature, of his power, of his holiness, of his wisdom, the only begotten Son of the Father.

John the Baptist

2. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet. The two passages here quoted are from Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3. Professor Lenski well reminds us that Mark, by referring only to Isaiah; and indeed the form of this prophet's words makes them most valuable. The words from Malachi and added as of life nature. Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare the way." The Father is actually speaking to the Son concerning the messenger who was to precede him and prepare for his coming.

3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Literally, the wilderness here referred to was that great desert including the whole eastern portion of Judaea, and extending on both sides of the Jordan River. "In this very wilderness Elijah made his last appearance. John was a living illustration of how little man really needs here below, something we are prone to forget."

Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Josephus, when describing a march of Vespasian, says that with the vanguard of an Oriental procession were 'such as were to make the road even and straight, and, if it were anywhere rough and hard to be passed over, to plane it, and to cut down the woods that hindered their march, that the army might not be tired'."—Thomas M. Lindsay.

4. John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. The word "repentance" means "to turn around," "to change one's mind," "to reverse one's attitude and verdict." It is not here said that baptism will secure the remission of sins, but that baptism was a public recognition that the heart had repented of sin. Baptism for adults, unless there is repentance and a washing away of sins by the Lord Jesus, is of no value whatever, but really a mockery.

6. And John was clothed with camel's hair. This probably means that John wore a long, loose robe woven from camel's hair, a garment of coarse texture often worn by the extreme poor. And had a leathern girdle about his loins. "The girdle kept the robe from flapping apart, and enabled it to be tucked up for rapid walking."

8. And did eat locusts and wild honey. "The law permitted the use, for food, of locusts and certain large kinds of grasshopper."

"There Cometh After Me"

7. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I. John here implies that he too is strong, the divine strength of the word having been given to him. The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. In an Oriental household it was the task of the slave to stoop down and unloose the thongs which bound the sandals of a guest or the slave's master to their feet, and John here acknowledges that there is such an infinite difference between Christ in all of his glory and perfectness and himself in all of his human limitations that, though he is gladly the servant of Christ, it is only by the grace of God that he is such, for in himself he is not worthy even to perform a menial task for the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit. The contrast between the work of the Baptist and that of the Messiah amounts to this, that the mightier One who is to follow John will do the real work of which the Baptist is able to perform only the sign. Water cleanses only the body. But the Holy Spirit is the element in which man is cleansed inwardly and really, and it is this real baptism which the coming One was to perform."

Jesus Baptized

9. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee. Nazareth was located midway between the Lake of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. And was baptized of John in the Jordan.

"Jesus recognizes that the office of John was of divine appointment. Though he had no personal need of baptism, by refusing or neglecting it he would (if he had not been baptized) have cast discredit upon the work of John." Furthermore, our Lord formally identified himself with the human race in its sin and degradation.

10. And straightway. Coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him. The appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove is indicative of the gentleness and pureness of the One upon whom the Holy Spirit rested.

11. And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. This is the first of three declarations heard from heaven; the second being at the transfiguration and the third being just before the passion of our Lord. There can be no question that the voice here heard was the voice of none other than God the Father.

Of no other person in all history were these words spoken from heaven, or could they be literally true. And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. The strong urge of the Spirit met the consent of Jesus. He did not go into this temptation against his will. Yet Jesus did not throw himself into this temptation of his own accord. Jesus was brought into it by his Father's own Spirit. This means that his temptation had to be, and at this very time . It was God's will to have his Son's ministry begin with this mighty battle against Satan and with the resultant victory.

13. And he was in the wilderness forty days. Forty is almost always in the Scriptures used as a symbol of testing, of trial, of suffering, of punishment. Christ could not be tempted in his divine nature, for God can never be tempted to evil. The temptation relates only to the human nature of the Lord Jesus. And he was with the wild beasts.

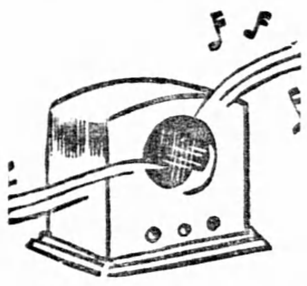
By inserting this phrase Mark probably intends only to emphasize the loneliness and the wildness of the environment in which Jesus was tempted. And the angels ministered unto him.

An Austrian, asking for divorce, said :"My wife's skirts are far too short. She doesn't seem to mind how much of her legs she shows when the wind blows." She produced evidence that she was merely being fashionable. Case dismissed.

A — C

A Modern-Style Santa Drops Down From the Clouds

Using a [illegible] plane, a modern Santa Claus finds this new flivver plane adequate in making his annual visit



Around The Dial

RADIO HEADLINERS OF THE WEEK

From Hollywood comes word that Mickey Mouse, with Minnie, and others of his famous gang, is starting a series of programs on Sundays from the Mickey House Theatre of the Air, which is aired over the coast-to-coast NBC-Red Network from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. It's a little over six years, now, that Mickey has been bringing smiles and hearty laughs to movie patrons and devotees of the comic strips, but now he comes in voice directly into the homes of radio listeners to enliven their Sunday afternoons. Behind the voices of Mickey and his gang will be the music of Felix Mills, noted Hollywood musician. Bringing Mickey to the radio is another leaf in Walt Disney's crown of laurel. Already, the antics of the lovable comics have brought fame and fortune to their creator. A native of Chicago, Disney found the study of art a troublesome problem in his youth, and it was not until he left his native city and settled in Kansas City that Mickey was born. It was there that the first Mickey Mouse movie was created. The working staff of the Disney studios at that time was Walt and his brother, Rol. Today, the Disney studios employ six hundred persons.

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Piano Team's Double Wedding

The two piano team of Lou Snyder and Murray Ross, playing under the name of "The Sophisticates of the Piano," over CBC and the Mutual Networks, is perhaps the most popular piano team in Canada. We understand that a double wedding is being planned by these boys at some date in February, and this should be quite a novel feature in itself. Both Murray and Lou are very much attached to their respective young ladies, who are, by the way, non-professional.

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Community Sing-Song

We dropped in last Sunday to see the Community Sing-Song out at the Century theatre. Stan Francis, the genial M.C. of the program, turned in quite a nice performance. The little surprises that come in about the middle of the program are somewhat original. Vince Boyd, the man behind the piano, is quite a favorite with the audience in the theatre, and turns in a sparkling piece of solo work during the program. The tickets are free, and all are welcome.

It is a little known fact that those four boys known as the Ragamuffins, heard every Monday night at 10:00 o'clock, started their career in a cellar. The boys scrimped and saved to buy instruments, and what were too expensive for them they made themselves. Between them they play two clarinets, two guitars, a bass fiddle, and a collection of pots, pans, washboards and tin horns, and believe me, they make music out of it. On top of all this, George Boyd, the tin horn expert, imitates a trumpet and does a choice bit of singing. To say nothing of the vocal trios and quartets that the boys have arranged. Harvey Templar, Ally Enning and Tommy Ellwell, constitute the remaining members of the organization. About a year and a half ago the boys were taken in tow by Wally Armour, conductor of the Pond's program, and after much work he has produced a smart musical band with just these four boys.

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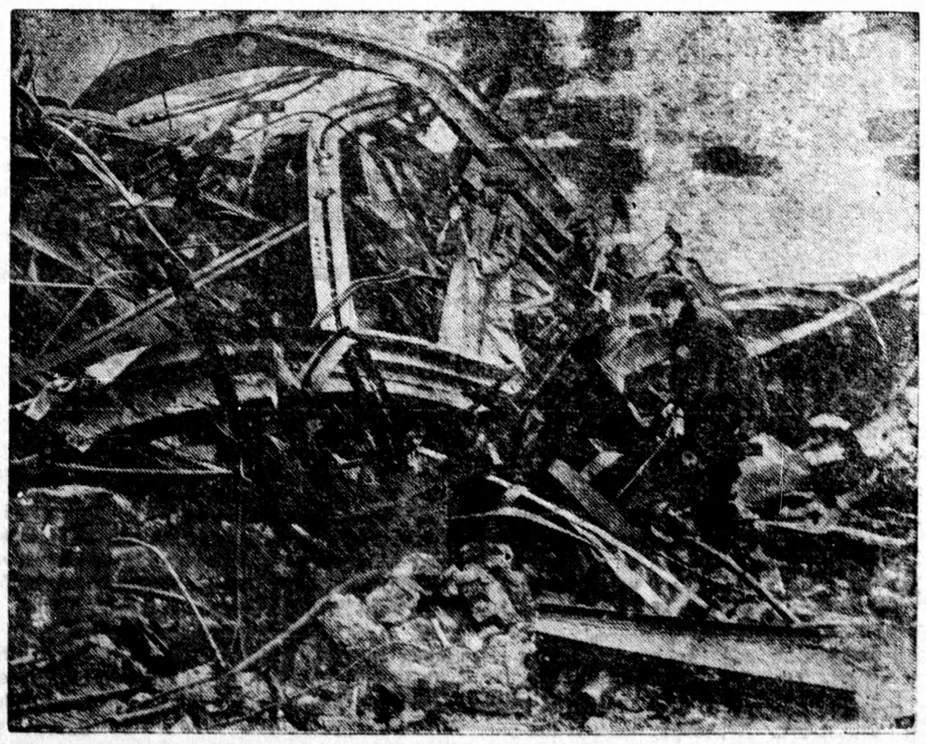
Aired Six Thousand Amateurs

The Good Humor Amateur Show, heard every Sunday at 12:30 over an eastern network, is blazing ahead, bringing to the microphone new voices and new novelties. It is now about one year since Good Humor started the amateur contests, and in that time approximately six thousand amateurs have been auditioned, and approximately three hundred have been presented to radio listeners. In the next few weeks the Good Humor people will conduct the final contests, the winner of which will be sent to Hollywood for screen and voice tests. From what we have seen of this talent, we feel that the lucky one to be sent down, will make a good stab at success in the glamor city of the world. There still may be an opportunity for you to take part. Just send your application for an audition to Good Humor, in care of CFRB or CKCL, Toronto.

The smallest English inn consists of one room measuring 15 ft. by 11 ft. It is the Smith's Arms, Godmanstone, near Dorchester, and has just been sold.

British housewives buy something like 1,600,000,000 tins of foodstuffs every year.

Still At Work on Ruins of Crystal Palace



Workmen are still breaking up the metallic wreckage of the famed Crystal Palace in London, England, 13 months after it burned down.

Trying to Return Land to Indians

Weary Homesteaders in "Dust Bowl" Area Are Willing to Sell Out

Discouraged, weather-beaten homesteaders of New Mexico proposed to give their land back to the Indians.

Several score work-hardened settlers met with blanketed Navajo in a big pow-wow at the white man's kiva at Crown Point, N.M., uniting efforts to get the Great White Father in Washington to buy up the high, wind-blown plateau homestead lands and present them to the Navajo.

To the Indian, success would a return nearer "Dinetah"—the cred, immemorial homelan Navajo in North Central co.

To many a white h would mean a char lands on which h drought, bitter co all the pioneering vi

The immediate goal o association of Indian and p passage in Congress of the boundary bill. The measur add approximately 250,000 the Navajo reservation— "checkerboarded" in al of public domain, ho and Indian holdings.

Sentenced

Nick Megugorac, 19, is the youngest person to be sentenced to life imprisonment in Los Angeles, Cal., in 10 years.

Patients Vote in the First Soviet Election

Confined to a hospital in Moscow, Russia, Mrs. Z. Khodakova casts her vote in the first general Soviet election.

The Stars And You

By A. R. WEIR

WHAT THE STARS FORETELL FOR THOSE BORN ON JANUARY 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

★★★

If the date of your birth is listed above, CAPRICORNUS is your Zodiac sign. This makes the White Onyx and Moonstone your lucky stones and black or very dark blue your lucky colour. It also suggests that you should marry one born between August 21st and September 20th; Dec. 21 and January 20 or April 21 to May 20, or one who has the moon in Capricornus. Capricornians usually live to a great age and are zealous and diligent people as a rule.

YOUR OWN BIRTH DATE:

JANUARY 7—Your viewpoint is usually serious. You take life seriously. You take people seriously. You take your troubles much too seriously. Try to cultivate optimism. This should be a successful and prosperous year for you—there should be more stability in your life.

JANUARY 8—You are very affectionate, very loving and very kind hearted yet no one is aware of this. You are too quiet, dignified and secretive about your motions and even cold and selfish in your manner towards others. You should be much more demonstrative. Some very important changes are indicated in your business affairs and all indications are good.

JANUARY 9—Indications are that you have let yourself get into a rut. Why? It is important to success that one should keep pace with progress. Capricornians usually amass great wealth when they are ambitious and steadily and patiently industrious. An unexpected gain financially is indicated for you.

JANUARY 10—You are sincere but selfish. You are zealous and diligent but melancholy and introspective. Do not live so much alone with yourself. The year is good for social affairs and also for love. Relatives will benefit you. Business affairs should be excellent.

JANUARY 11—Much happiness should come your way this year. If you are single you may marry. You do not make friends easily but should cultivate a more friendly attitude toward others.

JANUARY 12—Your financial affairs this year should have a big influence on your later life. It should be a prosperous period. Your health will be good and a pleasant holiday is indicated. Be careful lest your natural thrift becomes meanness.

JANUARY 13—A considerable improvement is shown in your financial affairs this year also important news from a long distance. You will also be lucky in love. In business you have great ambitions but socially you consider your family all you require. This is not good. You may allow yourself to get into a rut.

If you birth date is not listed above and you would like a horoscope for any birth date in the year, or if you would like a complete personal horoscope for any date listed above, send 10c to A. R. Weir, 73 Adelaide St. W., Toronto. Please print your name, address and birth date plainly.