

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson No. 1, January 6, 1918.

John prepares the way for Jesus—Mark 1:1-11.

**Commentary.**—1. John's coming foretold (vs. 1-3). 1. The beginning of the gospel, etc.—This verse constitutes the title of Mark's Gospel. His narrative takes up the work of John the Baptist while he was fulfilling his ministry of six months prior to the entrance of Jesus upon his public mission. John began his preaching in the summer of A.D. 26, when he was thirty years of age, and Jesus was baptized six months later, or when he was thirty years old, the age at which Jewish priests were installed into their office. From the last of B.C. 5, the date of Christ's birth, to A.D. 26 is thirty years. When dates began to be reckoned from the birth of Christ, scholars made a mistake and placed the date of Christ's birth four years too late, hence in correcting the error we have the anomaly of the statement that Christ was born in the year B.C. 5. The title of Mark's Gospel declares unmistakably that Jesus is the Son of God. 2. As it is written in the prophets—The coming of the forerunner of Jesus, as well as that of Jesus himself, was prophesied centuries in advance. The first prophecy here quoted is from Mal. 3:1, and the second is from Isa. 40:3. A new age was being introduced and a new leader. For the new leader a preparation was necessary as pertaining to the people. They must be prepared to receive him. The prophecy, which all Jews accepted, of the coming of the forerunner, was fulfilled in John and his ministry. I send my messenger—God the Father speaks in the first person and in the present tense. The use of the present tense makes the prophecy vivid, and already were the plans laid for its fulfillment. The messenger was God's own obedient and honored servant. A great honor was bestowed upon John in sending him on this exalted mission. Happy is that man or woman, boy or girl, who is in fact God's messenger, before his face—Before the face of Jesus. John preceded Jesus by six months.

3. The voice—it is remarkable that the messenger is thus largely lost sight of in the message. It is not so much the man as the announcement he makes. It is the "voice," the instrument employed in declaring the coming of the Messiah and in preparing the people to receive him, that is important. John's entire ministry was characterized by humility. He was the "voice," the messenger, and was happy to be just that, crying: "Shouting, crying with a high, strong voice," in the wilderness—The ministry of John was confined to the region west of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River and east of Jerusalem. He preached in the uninhabited villages rather than in the cities or villages of Judea, prepare ye the way of the Lord—The responsibility was placed upon the people themselves to make his path straight—Righteousness in its perfection characterized the Messiah and righteousness must characterize those who would receive him.

4. John's work (vs. 4-8). 4. John did baptize in the wilderness—The place along the Jordan where John baptized is not definitely known. Although we are told that it was at Bethabara (John 1:28), yet we can not definitely locate the place. Some scholars are of the opinion that it was nearly east of Jericho, and others that it was about fourteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. The baptism was in token of the fact that the candidates repented of their sins. Repentance in his preaching John's theme was repentance. The people were called upon to turn away from their sins and permanently forsake them, and turn fully to God. There is really service for sin in connection with true repentance. For the remission of sins—There can be no remission of sins without repentance, and there can be no true repentance without a sense of sin. The preaching of the gospel is to the end that men shall realize the enormity of their sins, repent of them and believe in Jesus to the saving of their souls. 5. There went out unto him—Even though John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing in a sparsely settled region, he had a hearing. He was fulfilling a divinely-appointed mission and his manner and his message drew the people to him. All the land of Judea—Judea in the time of Christ was the southern province of Palestine, extending from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan River on the east, and including Jerusalem and Jericho as the principal cities, and there were many other towns and villages. Representatives of all classes of people and of many regions flocked to John's ministry. They of Jerusalem—Jerusalem was the centre of the Jewish faith and the various shades of religion were found there. From that city crowds went to see and hear John the Baptist. Baptized, confessing their sins—It cannot be stated with certainty whether or not John made use of the ordinance of baptism, adopting some rite already in use, or instituting baptism as a rite all his own. He employed it as a sign that those who accepted it repented of their sins. His point was of repentance.

6. John was clothed with camel's hair—John the Baptist was rugged in his appearance, for in his clothing and manner resembled one of the Old Testament prophets. His garment was of camel's hair being woven from the long coarse hair of the camel, and from the inner hair of the camel, but this was not the kind that John wore, a garment of skin. The garment was an important part of Oriental dress and was often elaborate and costly, and the girdle that John wore was simply a cloth of camel's hair. —The Messianic law—allowed the use of a leavened loaf as a food (Leviticus 23:7, 22, 23). Scarcely they are used by the poorest of the people, wild honey—Honey made by

wild bees and deposited in hollow trees or in clefts of rocks, in his clothing and diet John was a man of the wilderness. 7. preached, saying—Mark gives us only a hint of what John said, but enough to show the character of his message. Compare Matt. 3:7-12 and Luke 3:1-15, one might think that John had ever in mind the fact that he was only the forerunner of the Messiah, and he acknowledged his own inferiority. latched—The fastenings of the sandals, the thongs or laces used in binding the sandals on the feet. I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose—it was the duty of the lowliest servant to fasten and unfasten, and carry about the sandals of his master. John considered Jesus as highly and forever exalted above him. 8. baptized you with water—As a sign of repentance, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. The baptism with water would not change the heart of wash away sin, but the baptism with the Holy Ghost would accomplish both.

9. Baptism of Jesus (vs. 9-11). 9. In those days—At the close of John's first six months of preaching in preparation for the coming of Jesus. Jesus came from Nazareth—He was thirty years old and was about to begin his public ministry. His home had been in Nazareth since his return from Egypt with Joseph and Mary. The distance from Nazareth to the place where John was preaching was about sixty miles. Galilee—The northern province of Palestine. It borders on the Sea of Galilee on the east, was sanctified of John in Jordan—Matthew records the objection John made to baptizing Jesus because he felt himself unworthy to perform the rite for one so exalted as the Christ (Matt. 3:13-15). Jesus was baptized to show his opposition to sin and his love for righteousness, and as a mark of his induction into the priestly office. 10. The Spirit like a dove descending upon him—The baptism by John showed that he was set apart by human hands for his great mission, and the coming of the Spirit upon him showed that he was divinely set apart and fitted for his work. The lightning of the form of a dove upon him was the visible representation of an invisible work. 11. a voice from heaven—The Father made an audible declaration to the assembled multitude that Jesus was his Son.

Questions. At what point does Mark begin his record of Christ's life? What prophecies does he quote? What was the mission of John the Baptist? What is repentance? Where did John preach? Whom did he have as hearers? Describe the appearance of John and his food. How is his humility shown? Describe the baptism of Jesus. Show that the Trinity was there manifest.

## PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Topic—Herald of the King.

1. John's proclamation.

2. Divinely authenticated.

1. John's proclamation. We are introduced to a rough-appearing preacher, thoroughly honest, unselfish and noble, uttering sharp sentences and aiming at a spiritual repentance for the remission of sins. Of the old dispensation Isaiah was the first prophet who wrote, and Malachi, the last. John the Baptist was the last of the old and the first of the new dispensation who spoke. Isaiah, in writing, had set the door ajar for Christianity, which John flung wide open. Malachi began to shut the door against Judaism, which John closed. Old Testament prophecy and John's preaching showed that the way was being prepared for the coming of Jesus. Again the long-silent spirit of God was speaking. The coming of prophecy, which seemed to have ended with Malachi, was again formed. The secret of John's power over men seems to have been that he was fully convinced that he was sent on a divine mission, and was so expressed in filling it that he cared little for anything else. He aimed directly at the need of his generation, seeking the most effective way possible to the consciences of men. He touched each class at the point of its special temptation and besetting sin. He insisted on the application of Isaiah's rule (Isa. 1:16). His words caught the tone of his character. His protest against sin was embodied in his example. He walked and talked with God until the time was ripe for his coming forth. To his anxious inquirers he returned answers which proved his tact in dealing with human nature. He had the instinct of the true teacher. The beauty of John's ministry lay in the recognition of the fact that Jesus possessed what he did not, the divine nature.

2. Divinely authenticated. The gospel began in God's purpose. It has a prophetic beginning in the first revelation to Adam, the patriarchs and prophets. It had its actual beginning in the incarnation of Jesus and the ministry of John. It had its efficacious beginning with the death of Christ. Its beginning in the preparatory ministry of John, marked a glorious epoch, the most wonderful beginning in the annals of time, a beginning without an end, the public commencement of a great life. The baptism of Jesus signaled the closing of John's commission as the forerunner of the opening of Christ's commission as the Redeemer and of the speedy fulfillment of the Father's great design of redeeming love. It represented the perfect purity which his preeminent ministry required. It was the most solemn dedication which history records. It was when Jesus had made himself one with the sons of man that he was declared to be the beloved Son of God. It was then that God himself took the herald's office. That voice approved the character and authorized the mission of the Son of God. His coming was the announcement of a new revelation of God's love to the great effort of humanity. John stood in the presence of the Trinity, God the Son, manifested in the flesh, the Holy Ghost, appearing in a dove-like form, God the Father speaking from heaven, revealing in Jesus, God and man, the only begotten Son of his love. This was the incarnation and proclamation of the Messiah when he began to be the great Prophet of the new covenant, anointed for his Messianic mission.

# TWO DUDES WHO CAME TO STOOK

The following letter was written by a farmer near Yorkton to a friend in Winnipeg in reference to a couple of youths who came down from the city to help with the harvest. The youths at home "assisted" in a bank for a few hours each day and thought they were working. After putting in part of a day in an oat field their desire to help to win the war by working in the harvest got a serious setback, and they hurriedly departed for the busy haunts of trade. The farmer is writing the friend to send out a couple more men. The letter follows:

Dear John,—I take my pen in hand to let you know we are all well and rite in the midst of the harvest, but the main thing I want to tell you is about the two dudes from Winnipeg that came down to help with the stooking. I read word from the employment bureau in Winnipeg that they were coming at \$2.75 a day and bird, so I was down to the station to meet them. Well, Sir, there was two kids got off—long about 18 or 19 years old they were. They were wearing white shirts with big white collar over their coats, and button boots with cloth tops on 'em and nifty suits and checked caps.

One of them he was the freshest guy of the two come up to me and he says Hello Rube, how is the little old alfalfa this fall flippin his fingers often the end of my whiskers. The other lad says to me stand right where you are kiddo and let me feast on you. Oh Alfred isn't that makeups perfect he says, couldn't he step right onto the stage now without ever going near the dressing room. I didn't know what he was talking about cause I only had my working clothes on. I said are youse young guys looking for work. They said they had come down to pick up a little easy money and secure some relief from the strain of the city. Do you think they were stand stookin I said and they told me they thought they were in pretty good condishun as they had been playing pool all summer. Each of them had a nice new suitcase and I thought they were kind of tight when I was throwing them in the democrat. Afterwards when they were at work the missus looked in them and all these was all kinds of cigarettes, a safety razor and a sweater. When we was drawing out to the farm they was asking all kinds of foolish questions about the work. The Smart Alex one said it ought to be pretty good sport, beat tennis all to nothing. He asked me what was the name of the see gee on the Starboard side and he had the gaud to ask me if he could have \$50 salary in advance.

Well that night they kind of opened their eyes when I showed them the way to the hayloft to sleep and throw em a horse blanket. One of them said something about May Garden perfume to woo the God of theophany. Well I had to take a big splash out of them 80 acres of oats dead ripe so I called the boys along about 6 o'clock in the morning. I went out to the stable with a lantern and hollered up to em. After a while I heard a noise and one of them came down the ladder carrying his suitcase. He seemed to be half asleep. Did you call, mother—he says you seem to be calling early this morning. Where are you going, I says. "I'm going some place to stay all night," he says, "you disturb my rest."

—What's the matter, couldn't you sleep? I told him this was the time we usually get up to harvest time and he says you're so much time in sleep. "I'm going to go to work," he says, "what's the idea," he said. I told him we were going to cut oats. Are they foolish questions about the work. He says why take advantage of them in the dark? Afterwards the other fellow came down and asked me if I believed in daylight saving, he said I seemed to be a good hand at it.

After breakfast we got into the field. Them oats was the tallest you ever seen right up over the horses heads. I was showing them dudes how to stook and one of them asked me if he couldn't get the loan of a step ladder to stand the sheaves up. I could see it was going to be heavy work alright. Well Sir there was a heavy dew on the ground and it wasn't long till them fellows was as wet as though they had been wading in water. I come close to the smart Alex one when I was passing with the binder once and he says Hey, Pop, is there any danger of submarines around here. I'd hate to get torpedoed just as I was leaning over to pick up a sheaf.

After a while one of the lads hailed me when I was passing. "How is the

time," he said. I looked at my watch and told him a quarter to eight. "Gawd," he said, "I thought it was near 1 o'clock. This is about the time I roll off the little old ostermoor town," he said. We went to eat along about noon with the sun red hot and them two lads had faces on them like the comb of our turkey gobbler. They was clean faded and they just dragged themselves up to the pump. How do you feel says one of 'em in a weak voice. I feel says the other just like Jim Jeffreys felt after he was down for the third count. I feel like I'd had ten turkish baths one after another and then been pulled through a knot hole. You could wring a tub of water out of me right now. Well Sir we went into dinner and the missus had the table piled high with new potatoes and onions and homemade bread and fried eggs and prunes. Those city yaps just lit into that as if they had been starved for a month. About eight eggs each they et. I says to one of them is your legs hollow. I understand he says right back that the board is thrown in with this job. As I says and you seem to be throwing it in alright. Why don't you get better after they had fed up a bit and smartly says to me Alfonso could you have the chef bring in some French vintage and a couple of perfectos. The other fellow says when do we take our siesta. I says what do you mean and he says when do we hit the hay for an afternoon nap. I says right back you hit them oats and hit them in a hurry too, it looks like rain. Oh very well Carlos, very well, do not be peeved I pray of thee.

Well Sir they went at it again and I could a put up more stooks in half an hour than those two did in the next two. After a while I stopped to fix the binder over in one corner and I heard the two lads talking. How would you like to be up to your neck in water down at the beach one said. And how would you like to be swinging in the hammock out on the verandah on Carlton street with the maid bringing you out long cold ones in thin glasses said the other. Think of sitting in one of those ice houses over in Norwood. Snow or think of being in the snowfields in the mountains. And all the time they was wrestling with them big sheaves of oats and the sun sending down heat like you was standing next to a red hot stove. Well by and by I missed them. I made another round of the field and them went over to where I saw them last. Hello I shouted and then I saw one of them stand up behind a long row of sheaves they had but up to keep off the sun. "Advance friend and give the password," said Mr. Smart Alex. I was plum disgusted so I said the password is for stooks fellows to get out of here. They looked at me surprised like and then one of them says three cheers, we're fired, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah. The other lad was sure tuckered out. He just raised his head a little and said in a weak voice—Tiger—hurrah—mother was right. And inside of an hour they was on the train going to Winnipeg.

Yours truly, HANK.  
P.S.—Send me down two MEN.

# SUNDAY AT HOME

**JESUS, THE CARPENTER.**  
If I could hold within my hand  
The hammer Jesus swung,  
Not all the gold in all the land,  
Nor jewels countless as the sand,  
All in the balance hung,  
Could weight the value of that thing  
And which his fingers once did cling.

If I could have the table he  
Once made in Nazareth,  
Not all the pearls in all the sea,  
Nor crowns of kings or kings to be,  
As long as men have breath,  
Could buy that thing of wood he  
made—  
The Lord of lords who learned a  
trade.

Yea, but his hammer still is shown.  
By honest hands that toil  
And round his table men sit down;  
And all are equals, with a crown,  
Nor gold nor pearls can soil;  
The shop of Nazareth was bare—  
But brotherhood was built there.  
—Charles M. Sheldon.

**THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.**  
There is one body, and one Spirit.  
Through him we both have access  
by one Spirit unto the Father. Now  
therefore ye are no more strangers  
and foreigners, but fellow-citizens  
with the saints, and of the household  
of God; and are built upon the foundation  
of the apostles and prophets,  
Jesus Christ himself being the chief  
corner stone; in whom all the build-  
ing fitly framed together groweth unto

an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.  
Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.  
Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

## THE SEVENTY.

(By the late Rev. H. T. Miller.)  
When they returned they said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy name." And he said, "In this rejoice not, but that the spirits are subject unto you; but, rejoice that your names are written in Heaven."

A little time after this, seven men of the seventy approached the Master with demure and inquiring faces. One said, "Is there a real book of life?" and the answer was, "Yes!" but not made of paper, or skins or grass; not bound in cloth or leather, or stored on shelves in libraries. The names are written on flakes or films of spirit texture, pure as fleecy clouds, and lasting as the days of heaven. Another asked, "Who are the scribes?" and the answer came, "They are legion," pens as sharp as points of light, accurate as the beams of the sun. Their hands are never cramped, pen never out of order, points of intelligence as numerous as particles of light. Names crowd each other, yet there is no confusion; the writers are never dull, sleepy, incompetent. They are willing, joyful, holy. Another asked, "Does the ink fade? Will it last; is there danger of any subtle chemical element that efface one name?"

The pen is of iron, the ink is sure, spirit indentations are on immortal surfaces, the wonder and glory, and study and mystery, of the universality of eternity. Another asked, "Will there be any additions to the list?" The answer came, "Yes and No." In one sense the name is fast forever, hoary with age, beautiful with youth. The name was there before the sun, or moon, or stars were made, or earth was formed, or creeping thing, or man.

And yet, in one sense, the number swells; because on earth mothers bear, babes are born, names are given, it is the names the mothers give that go down on the register. Angel enumerators gather up the name. Angels gather up into their baskets infants who cannot respond, except in the silent praise of their mute and beautiful songs. Another asked, "Is there difference in rank?" and the answer came, "Yes," a thousand times told, just as the one star differs from another star in glory. Men are not equal, no two alike. There is rank without envy, obedience without groveling, service without servility. Itwards and bound up in every act, each seed carries its own harvest, and sings its own harvest home song.

Another asked, "Have other worlds fallen?" The answer came; "The eternal silences of these infinite spaces have yet to speak." One thing is sure, this world is the peculiar heritage of the Son of Man. For the sake of this one, the ninety-nine millions of millions were left in the calm security of a pure, delightful wilderness.

These were left in peace, and the one wandering sheep was sought and consumed the shepherd's care. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save. The last question asked, "Are the names all human names?" and the answer came: "Yes," with the emphasis of light and the assurance of eternal truth. Not angels, devils, serpents and unrecorded grades of beings and of bliss, but men, men, men. The book of life is a supremely human book.

## U. S. Murder Record.

For every million inhabitants Canada has each year three murders; Germany, under five; Great Britain, ten; France, fourteen; Belgium, sixteen. In the United States there are every year 129 murders per million inhabitants. In one single year over 10,000 men, women and children are murdered. One murder in seventy-five pays the death penalty, and for the rest an average imprisonment of seven years settles the score.—Exchange.

Does a war loan necessarily mean borrowing trouble?

# MARKET REPORTS

## TORONTO MARKETS.

### FARMERS' MARKET.

Dairy Produce—		
Butter, choice dairy	80 45	80 7
Margarine, lb.	0 35	0 37
Eggs, new-laid, doz.	0 75	0 80
Cheese, lb.	0 09	0 30
Do., fancy, lb.	0 09	0 35
Dressed Poultry—		
Turkeys, lb.	0 32	0 35
Poultry, lb.	0 16	0 22
Spring chickens	0 25	0 28
Ducks, Spring, lb.	0 22	0 23
Geese, lb.	0 22	0 25
Fruits—		
Apples, bkt.	0 59	0 60
Do., bbl.	4 00	7 00
Vegetables—		
Beets, bag	1 00	1 15
Do., bag	0 45	0 75
Brussels sprouts, peck	0 08	0 25
Carrots, peck	0 09	0 20
Do., bag	0 05	0 25
Cauliflowers, each	0 08	0 10
Vegetable marrow, each	0 08	0 10
Onions, 5 lb. bag	2 50	2 75
Do., large bkt.	0 09	0 10
Do., picking, bkt.	0 05	0 75
Peas, bag	2 00	2 25
Peas, bunch	0 09	0 25
Do., peck	0 09	0 25
Sage, bunch	0 06	0 10
Sprinkles, peck	0 30	0 35
Savory, bunch	0 09	0 10
Turnips, peck	0 09	0 15
Do., bag	0 05	0 70

## MEATS WHOLESALE.

Beef, forequarters, cwt.	\$15 00
Do., hindquarters, cwt.	18 00
Carcasses, choice	17 00
Do., common	13 00
Veal, common, cwt.	11 00
Do., medium	12 00
Do., prime	20 00
Hog, heavy, cwt.	17 00
Shop hogs	12 00
Mutton, heavy	13 00
Do., light	18 00
Lamb, heavy	22 00
Lamb, Spring, lb.	0 24

## BUFFALO LIVE STOCK.

Best Buffalo, Report—Cattle, receipts, 500 steady. Calves, receipts 400; steady; \$7 to \$12.50. Hogs, receipts 7,000; strong. Heavy \$17.50 to \$17.75; mixed \$17 to \$17.25; Yorkers \$17 to \$17.25; light Yorkers \$16 to \$16.25; pigs and roughs \$12.75 to \$16; steady \$13 to \$14.50. Sheep and lambs, receipts 7,000; lambs \$13 to \$14.75; others unchanged.

## CHICAGO LIVE STOCK.

Cattle, receipts 11,000.	
Market strong.	
Butchers' stock	7 45
Stockers and feeders	6 35
Cows and heifers	5 39
Calves	8 50
Receipts 25,000.	
Market slow.	
Light	10 15
Medium	16 00
Heavy	16 55
Butcher's stock	15 50
Stockers and feeders	12 00
Calves	15 59
Receipts 12,000.	
Market weak.	
Butcher's stock	8 00
Stockers and feeders	12 00
Lambs, native	12 00



"WHAT A PRETTY FLOWER!"

## THE BIBLE NEGLECTED.

Though Still the Best Seller, It is Not Read as It Used to Be.

Although the Bible still leads all other best sellers, few read it. People still present Bibles to brides and grooms. People still present Bibles to children. Colporteurs still roam the country handing out Bibles among the villagers. Associations of devout enthusiasts still put Bibles in hotels. But the Bible is seldom read aloud in the home. And the type of American who daily reads his Bible in secret from a sense of duty is becoming more and more rare.

Quite apart from its moral and religious bearings, the neglect of the Bible involves a cultural handicap worth noting. It involves a cramping of the popular vocabulary, as no other literary masterpiece is such a well of English, pure and undefiled. It involves a dulling of literary perceptions, as literature abounds in biblical allusions which every reader of the Bible instantly understands, but which only readers of the Bible ever can. Finally it involves a failure to respond to many a good joke, as an astonishing percentage of the best quips are nothing more or less than biblical allusions.

It is mainly useless, we realize, to propose a course of self-enforced Bible reading for adults. We insist, however, that parents who want their children to get the most enjoyment out of life may well see to it that their children develop an acquaintance with the Bible. It is the basis of culture. And by culture we mean a capacity for enjoying the fine and beautiful things of this world and the capacity for producing some.

## Wild Carrot Seed.

Seeds of the wild carrot are small, but very numerous, and are covered with weak bristles which catch on wool, hair and clothing and distribute the seed for considerable distances. They frequently are harvested with grass, clover and alfalfa seed and are widely distributed by this means. As found in clover seed, the wild carrot seeds are usually without horns, as there are rubbed off in the clover huller.



THE HALIFAX DISASTER. RUINS OF ONE OF THE CHURCHES, THE NAME OF WHICH IS UNKNOWN.